

# **MARTIN HEIDEGGER**

## **Critical Assessments**

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**Edited by Christopher Macann**

**VOLUME IV: REVERBERATIONS**



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**Otto Pöggeler** 'Does the saving power also grow? Heidegger's last paths'. Translated from the German by Henry Pickford and reprinted by kind permission of the author and translator.

# Introduction

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Christopher Macann

It is in times of great danger  
that philosophers appear.

(Friedrich Nietzsche, *Grossoktavausgabe* X, 112)

The term adopted to christen this fourth and final volume of the four volume set dedicated to the thinking of Martin Heidegger is Janus faced: *Reverberations*. In the double sense of implications, applications, receptions, repercussions, etc., on the one hand, and, on the other linguistic resonances. The dynamic of the word, which is the verb, a work in the world.

Of all four volumes this was the one whose field was least circumscribed in advance and of whose contents I could therefore be least certain. Like Topsy, 'it just grewed' – in response to the priorities of my contributors rather than those of their editor. My original intention was to employ this volume as a general catchment for such less clearly defined parameters of Heidegger's thinking as his aesthetics (Wright/Sallis), his theology – or the theological implications of his philosophy (Kearney O'Leary), his psychology – or the psychological implications of his philosophy (Scott), his ethics – or the ethical implications of his thinking (Kellner/Macann), his impact on science (Kisiel/Chevalley), his reflections on technology (Takeichi), his reception in Japan (Parkes) as well as his political involvement. For reasons which have, no doubt, much to do with the controversy aroused by Farias' book, a controversy which shows no signs of abating, at least for the time being, this fourth volume has become dominated by the political question (Faye/Rockmore/Margolis/Janicaud/Kiss/Feher/Escoubas).

Until quite recently I knew next to nothing about the political side of Heidegger's life and work. And what little I knew (the Spiegel article, the existence of the Farias book, then the Ott response and so on) dic

not prompt me to press the investigation further – but for reasons which are perhaps somewhat unconventional. It has always seemed to me that the debate about ‘Heidegger and politics’ is neither philosophical (Heidegger had little to offer in the way of a political philosophy) nor political (he was by nature and temperament one of the least political of individuals) but *moral*.

And this presents me with a moral dilemma. On the one hand, I would not wish to say anything which might be taken to imply a diminishment, let alone a suspension, of the moral responsibility of a philosopher, either towards himself, towards the discipline which he represents in person, or towards others. However, twenty years of professional life within the framework of the university have led me to the conclusion that morality plays but a small part in the calculations of the professional philosopher. So that a great part of what passes for a moral assessment by philosophers of Heidegger’s political involvement cannot but appear as ‘moralizing’ – in the worst sense of that word.

But that is not the worst of it by any means. For one of the most self-defeating effects of the moral condemnation directed against Heidegger has certainly been to divert attention away from the many ills that abound in the university world, the very ills which give the ‘moralizing’ a hypocritical flavour; with the result that with the ‘Heidegger and politics’ controversy we often seem to be facing a phenomenon of ‘scapegoatism’ (a phenomenon which, I need hardly remind the reader, played a very large part in the rise of the Nazi party) – the tendency to project upon a self-styled adversary qualities one would rather not see in oneself in order precisely that one should not have to come to terms with these same qualities in oneself.

Sartre coined the term ‘bad faith’ to deal with phenomena of this kind. But if anything, this goes further than Sartrean ‘bad faith’. For Sartrean ‘bad faith’ was set up as a ploy adopted to *evade* responsibility. But what we are confronted with here is an *assumption* of responsibility which has become officially legitimized and which can therefore not merely be used to give professional philosophers the *impression* of assuming an ethical stance but do so in such a way that any further discussion about the ethicality of the profession is thereby suspended.

‘Scapegoatism’ of the kind indicated above would be a triple disaster. First, it would postpone the task of *critical self-analysis* and, moreover, would be specifically intended to do so – in short, it would work *against* the spirit of what Heidegger claimed he intended with his Rectoral address: ‘Die Selbstbehauptung der Universität’.<sup>1</sup> Second, it would give contemporary philosophers a feeling of *moral superiority* where in fact there might well be grounds for deploring what often seems to me an unprecedented decline in ethical standards within the university world, explained in part perhaps by the ease with which less qualified persons

were able to slip into the system in the halcyon days of the 1960s. And third, a displaced condemnation of this kind might lead philosophers to overlook not merely the *intellectual* merits of Heidegger's thinking but those other sides of his thinking in which he struggled to evoke the *spiritual* resources which might perhaps suffice to stem a decline of which he was himself well aware. In his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, a text in which we find the supposedly 'notorious' reference to the 'inner truth and greatness' of the National Socialist movement, we also find the following passage: 'The spiritual decline of the earth is so far advanced that the nations are in danger of losing the last bit of spiritual energy that makes it possible to see the decline and to appraise it as such.'<sup>2</sup>

If the singular case of Martin Heidegger's practical excursion is to bear fruit it can only be from the standpoint of a reflection upon the place of the philosopher in the only world in which the philosopher can be practically effective – the university world. Heidegger's temporary involvement in the political processes of his day cannot even be explained away as professional naivety, since countless other, supposedly far more worldly-wise, authorities were also misled into thinking that they too could 'lead the leader'. When Hitler was made Hindenberg's Chancellor, the exalted eminence of one of Germany's greatest military leaders was supposed to be sufficient to keep the young man under control. Schleicher and Papen grossly underestimated Hitler's political capacities, which included setting each against the other. When the Thyssens and the Krupps made financial deals with Hitler, it was assumed that the young upstart would be no match for the power of Germany's wealthiest industrialists. The Pope signed a Concordat with Hitler, assuming that this would confer some measure of protection upon the Catholic church in Germany. And abroad, when Hitler was appointed to the Chancellorship, the major powers did not hesitate to recognize the legitimacy of his position, as Heidegger himself pointed out in his *Spiegel* interview,<sup>3</sup> and indeed *deliberately* turned a blind eye on what was going in Germany right up until the Second World War, and this despite frequent and renewed reports of atrocities. Heidegger's 'error' was an error to which most of those who might have done something to correct the situation, had they acted in time and in concert, seem to have been equally susceptible, and this whether we are talking about Germans or about foreign nationals.

I shall therefore leave it to my contributors to discuss the *philosophy of politics*. I, for my part, should like to use this Introduction to raise a different, though related, question: *the politics of philosophy*.

In a piece on Heidegger and Jaspers which I have not had room to publish, Tom Rockmore writes:

It is reasonable to expect that a philosopher be held to a higher

standard than the average person, for virtually since the inception of the ancient Greek philosophical tradition philosophers have maintained that philosophy offers a deeper, in fact incomparable insight into the nature of reality.<sup>4</sup>

There are indeed good reasons why these kinds of expectations should be entertained. First, a large number of great philosophers have been persons of very considerable moral stature, even when this ethical integrity only manifested itself in a relatively undramatic way. Socrates' personal integrity has been cast in an unforgettably dramatic mould. But the quietist piety of a Descartes, a Spinoza or a Kant, would hardly have attracted much attention at the time even though, at the very least, it does most certainly attest to an impressive rejection of the worldly seductions of wealth, power or influence. More recently, philosophers such as Russell and Sartre have left their readers in no doubt about the political responsibility of the philosopher and have devoted considerable time and energy to defending the political causes in which they believed.

Second, ethics (or what has sometimes been called the 'moral sciences') has, for reasons which relate to the genesis of this discipline, been assigned to philosophy and has come to constitute a specific province of philosophical enquiry – along with logic, epistemology, aesthetics, metaphysics and so on. To be sure, considerable efforts have been made in recent years to reduce the *moral* import of ethics. In the analytic tradition, the tendency to transform ethics into a matter of conceptual clarification or the assessment of the epistemological status of ethical theories has done much to neutralize the *moral* implications of the discipline while, on the continental side, it is not even clear that ethics still constitutes a distinct branch of philosophy, and for reasons which have something to do with the Heideggerian influence. And yet, as Heidegger made perfectly clear in his later deliberations, the species finds itself today at an unprecedentedly critical crossroads, which leads *either* in the direction of technological destruction *or* in the direction of a transformation of our very being-relation. And such a transformation, I would argue, cannot but be ethical in character.

Third, and because ethics has traditionally been regarded as a province of philosophy, it is the philosopher who is called upon to teach the discipline of ethics in the classroom. And not only in the classroom. In America, and elsewhere, ethics is currently becoming a fashionable subject, with a proliferation of new courses on business ethics, medical ethics, sexual ethics, etc., courses which are often sponsored by businesses themselves and offered to their employees on the premises in a desperate attempt to stem the disastrous financial and economic consequences of fraud on a scale never before seen.

In principle this supposition is not unreasonable. In practice however,

it attests to a naive extension of the conventional *technological* conception of the relation of theory and practice – practice as the application of theory. The accomplished student of computer science is indeed the man to employ in the solution of practical computer problems since *knowing* usually does lead to *doing* in a way which is not complicated by extraneous considerations. But in the moral sciences the relation is much more complex. However one may applaud, in principle, the Platonic conception of the relation (whereby ‘knowing the good’ implies ‘doing the good’), it is difficult not to note the difficulties attending such a conception in the actual circumstances of life. First, *knowing the good* may, and indeed usually does, call for action *contrary* to the interests of the agent (and if one is a Kantian, this conflict will precisely attest to the genuinely ethical character of the action in question). It is this ‘price to be paid’ which acts as a deterrent to any effective application of the ‘right’ course of action. Second, so far from it being the case that those most capable of knowing the good actually *do* do the good, it is, in my experience, the simpler and more integral natures who are usually most responsive to the claims of morality, while the ‘cleverer’ and more ‘educated’ natures will always be able to find some ‘good’ reason for evading these claims.

Third, in the ethical sphere, *doing* is bound up with *being* in a way that has no parallel in the technical sphere or the sphere of practical efficacy. It is certainly the business of philosophy to investigate this extremely complex relation with a view to determining how knowledge of the good can be so presented as to result in a transformation of the very being of the one to whom this knowledge is transmitted. For, in the end, doing the good will never be more than a pragmatic maxim unless it emanates from a nature which is good in its very being, that is, in its intrinsic constitution. Precisely because, in the ethical sphere, the relation between knowing, being and doing is extremely complex, the only ultimately convincing proof is *proof by example*.<sup>3</sup> It is for this reason that the very least that can be expected from philosophers is that those professionally qualified and duly appointed to *teach* the discipline of ethics exhibit, in their day-to-day behaviour as professionals, *conduct* which meets and matches the principles taught in the classroom. To insist upon this is to do no more than to endorse the time-honoured maxim: *Practice what you preach!*

In the course of twenty years of professional life I have witnessed a range of practices I never thought to see in an academic environment. Most of these practices can be brought under a rubric which forms the topic of the first two books of Plato’s *Republic*, and against which Plato has Socrates strenuously labour throughout this, his longest and most complete, dialogue: *Justice is the interest of the stronger!* Together with its collateral maxims: In a position of institutional weakness, do whatever

the *strong require*. In a position of institutional strength, do whatever *you want*; in the knowledge that what you want is what you will be able to get, thanks to the overt or covert complicity of the other, 'weaker' members of the institution, who can be counted on to 'know' where their best interests lie. Since, in a normal university framework, weakness turns to strength of its own accord as you climb the steps of the institutional ladder, what this maxim in fact enjoins is the 'worldly wisdom' of initially suppressing any moral scruples you might have with regard to policies adopted by your 'superiors' with a view to soliciting the support of those who can help you to positions of strength in which you yourself will also eventually be able to enjoy the same immunity from scrupulous resistance to your own self-interested action.

In his article on the 'Ethics of authenticity' Kellner summarizes Heidegger's position as follows:

Heidegger claims that in everyday behaviour most people are not aware of their unique potentiality for individuality or of their possible authenticity, and have not chosen their own possibilities. In his [Heidegger's] view, calculating where one stands in the social hierarchy and concern for one's social status puts one in subjection to the other. For in order to maintain one's standing, one must do what '*they*' approve of, praise, command and require, and refrain from socially disapproved or forbidden behaviour. In this way, one submits to an often subtle and unnoticed domination by the norms and conventions of society and forfeits one's own possibilities of thought and action. This submission and bondage to one's social norms, peers and leaders results in an averageness, a levelling down of social behaviour to a certain homogeneity and sameness. In this way, one is disburdened of individuality and responsibility for being-a-self and is accommodated by one's society, rewarded for one's submission. However, 'in these ways of being', Heidegger writes, 'one is in a state of inauthenticity and failure to stand by oneself'.

I have chosen to reproduce this passage at length despite the fact that it does not claim to do more than simply *summarize* the Heideggerian position because it also expresses, to perfection, the kind of behaviour that makes for success in the contemporary academic environment. To make the pertinence of the above-cited summary even more dramatic, it should be noted that where Kellner talks of 'refraining from socially disapproved or forbidden behaviour' he might also have added that this socially disapproved or forbidden behaviour might also be, and often is, behaviour which, by even the most elementary standards, would be ethical in character and its contrary (the socially approved or enjoined) unethical. No doubt it is for this reason that nothing seems to be more



embarrassing to the professional philosopher than the raising of ethical questions in the context of the day-to-day business of academic life.

This unreadiness to let philosophical communication be contaminated by ethical questions belongs to precisely that levelling-down process which Heidegger identified with such perspicuity and attributed to the 'They'. Worse, to the extent that there is an appeal to morality in contemporary Western society at large, it is coming to take on the ever more Heideggerian guise of deliberate, though perhaps not fully self-conscious, concealment. It should not therefore come as a surprise to discover that the very societies who are most outspoken in their defence of the values of law and order, religion, morality, the family, health and sanity and so on and so forth, actually *lead the way* (statistically speaking) in the violation of the very principles they profess to espouse.<sup>6</sup>

Dominique Janicaud in his recent book *L'ombre de cette pensée*,<sup>7</sup> a chapter of which I am fortunate enough to be able to reproduce in this collection, quite rightly takes Farias and others to task for failing to substantiate the claim that the philosophy of *Being and Time* was in accord with Nazi ideology. I would like to go further and insist that, in my view, few texts have an equivalent power to inspire in the reader resistance to what 'They' require, to call the reader away from lostness in the 'They' and toward an authentic sense of self than those passages of *Being and Time* devoted to an examination of the issue of conscience.

It frequently falls to the lot of a junior professor to be asked to evaluate the work of a colleague in a context in which he 'knows', in advance, what is expected of him by the institution he serves or rather by those who temporarily occupy the leading positions in that institution. He 'knows' that 'They' want negative or positive assessments (depending on whether or not 'They' want to dismiss or retain the individual in question). And he may very well also 'know' that this assessment has little or no bearing on the intrinsic quality of the work under review or even upon the intrinsic quality of the person who did the work. And, if he 'knows' what is good for him, he will not let this 'knowledge' arouse in him anything resembling a moral scruple.

But there is more, much much more that he will also 'know' – in that quite specific way in which knowledge happens in the 'They'. He will also 'know' that if a negative judgment is being solicited from him it will be recorded in such a way that his own identity will be carefully concealed. He will 'know' that the greater the discrepancy between the judgment arrived at and the work on which it is supposed to be based, the greater will be the eventual gratitude of those whose intentions and ambitions he will thereby be advancing and that, consequently, even if, perchance, a discrepancy of this kind is brought to light, he will be able to count upon the co-operation of the vast majority of those in the profession to diminish the impact of the discrepancy and so to divert

responsibility for the discrepancy from specific individuals to, at worst, procedural irregularities.

But this by no means exhausts the 'knowledge' available to him through the 'They'. He will also 'know' that even if he supports those whose intention it is to dismiss a colleague and is in turn appropriately rewarded, his relation with the colleague in question will remain on a better footing than if he had supported the colleague and secured thereby his own eventual downfall – and this no matter whether his earlier action was successful or not. For he will 'know' that, in the final analysis, professional friendships are based not upon a recognition of intrinsic human or intellectual qualities but upon a calculation of extrinsic power-political relations. This means that success in institutional terms (no matter what the means employed to obtain this success) will, in the end, prove self-justifying, whereas failure, in institutional terms, even, and even especially, if it follows from a 'resolute' determination to adhere to morally acceptable principles will, in the end, prove self-defeating. For, from the strategically advantageous position of institutional command, violators are capable of legitimizing the steps that led them to their decisions (even, and even especially, if these decisions were clearly illegitimate) while, from the strategically disadvantageous position of institutional marginalization, the victims of such violation will not only find it impossible to get a hearing but will find their actions (and probably also their very persons) represented in a light which justifies the action taken against them; so that, paradoxically, though in complete accord with that logic of 'ambiguity' which prevails within the 'They', the more *morally impeccable* the action in question, the more *morally suspect* the individual will have to be *made to appear* in order to justify the steps taken to neutralize the moral effect of his action.

In every instance, I have put the word 'know' and 'knowledge' or even 'moral' and 'morality' in quotation marks because, as we all know, this 'knowledge' and this 'morality' is never, and can never be, made explicit as such. For only if it is left *implicit* does it become possible to employ the strategy of 'deniability' (so resolutely adhered to by Nixon's Watergate cabinet) or, at least, to leave room for that range of interpretations which is essential to the critical tactic of evasion and ir-responsibility, a tactic in the absence of which the institutional practices in question could not be sustained. I know of no philosopher who has analysed the phenomenon of the a-, or even the im-, moral impact of social and institutional pressure more effectively than Martin Heidegger.

It might seem to be the case that the prevalence of a 'They' self in the academic community was of no greater (nor less) significance than in any other institutional environment – except that, from the very beginning, as mentioned before, philosophers have conceived of themselves as ethical arbiters and therefore, in a special sense, as persons

exceptionally well qualified to dismantle, or at least to cast suspicion upon the dominion of the 'They'. Is it an accident that three of the greatest thinkers of the last hundred years (Marx, Nietzsche and Freud) have frequently been called 'philosophers of suspicion'?<sup>8</sup> If not, it cannot but be a matter of especial concern to philosophers to discover that the dominion of the 'They' is *more than averagely* prevalent in their own institutional environment, and for the very simple and sheerly *practical* reason that philosophers are today almost entirely dependent upon the university institution for their very survival. Once the Socratic gadfly has become an institutional parasite, a collapse in ethical standards within the profession is almost inevitable.

As I have tried to show in my paper on 'The ethics of authenticity', I believe that, with appropriate modifications, an ethics can be developed out of the critical theme of 'authenticity'. Of course, we know that Heidegger not only disclaimed any intention to develop an ethics but insisted that ethics was a derivative discipline and that therefore any genuinely fundamental analysis must get back to roots which antecede the very possibility of the emergence of ethics as a distinct discipline. This does not militate against the ethical import of Heidegger's doctrine of authenticity (which many critics have interpreted as an ethics, or at least a proto-ethics). But it does help to explain certain theoretical inadequacies inherent in the doctrine itself – and, in particular, the refusal of the transcendental contribution to ethical theorizing.

In a passage from his *Notizen zu Martin Heidegger* (§157)<sup>9</sup> Jaspers objects: "'Resoluteness", but with respect to what?' What indeed! It is the vacuousness of the principle which constitutes the problem. Heidegger always resisted any attempt to elicit a specification of concrete forms of behaviour which might be in accordance with the principle of 'resoluteness', as transgressing the legitimate sphere of philosophy. And this rejoinder is, in the main, entirely legitimate. But even though such a specification of *concrete forms of behaviour* might have been out of order, still, *Being and Time* might at least have furnished *criteria for determining*, in any given instance, whether a specific form of behaviour did or did not meet the legitimate requirements of resoluteness.

To put the matter in the most dramatic way possible (and surely this must have been at the back of Jaspers' mind), a way which is for historical reasons entirely pertinent to the discussion of 'Heidegger and politics', nobody could possibly fault Hitler on his 'resoluteness', nor even upon the intimate connection between the causes which Hitler espoused and his very own being (his being-toward-death?). It was not his resolute commitment to certain causes (in which he most probably sincerely believed) which is the issue but the nature of those same causes and the manner in which they were pursued. But any evaluation of the causes in question presumes a suspension of the ethical suspension which

Heidegger himself adopted. To put it in the language of a Lévinas, ethics cannot be subordinated to (still less eliminated by) ontology.

Moreover, a careful reading of the contexts in which Heidegger employs the concept of *Eigentlichkeit* (and its related themes) makes it very difficult to sustain the thesis that this concept is evaluatively neutral and has nothing to say with regard to the ethical viability of the authentic individual. *Eigentlichkeit* is that to which *Being and Time* calls the reader. It is Heidegger's *ethics* in that large sense of ethics which made it possible for Spinoza to call his entire ontology an *Ethics*. As such, *Being and Time* remains, to my way of thinking, and subject to all the necessary qualifications, one of the most impressive contributions to ethical philosophy of this century. And yet, as we know, and as the contributors to this volume have amply demonstrated, rarely has a major philosopher been subject to such extensive moral condemnation as Martin Heidegger.

It would be foolish of me to venture upon territory which has been so thoroughly and carefully cultivated in this volume. But I would like to say a word about a very recent, American, attempt to come to terms with the political issue, Richard Wolin's *The Politics of Being: The Political Thought of Martin Heidegger*.<sup>10</sup> I would like to focus on this one instance not so much for its own sake (though it is a persuasive piece of writing) but because it exhibits many of the characteristic, and characteristically naive, prejudices of our times.

Wolin begins by deriving a political critique from cultural elitism. But what culture worth the name has ever been anything other than elitist, the work of 'aristocrats' in that quite specific, original Greek sense of the word in which by the latter (the *aristoi*) was meant the excellent (morally as well as intellectually)? The difference is that whereas in Greek times culture was (and was expected to be) produced by the few it was not produced for the few but for the *entire citizenry*. Greek culture sought to level up not to level down. It is our contemporary culture, with its populist tendencies, which discourages cultural discrimination and which seeks to make money out of the production, sale and consumption of spiritual goods which is truly contemptuous of the people and, in this sense, utterly undemocratic.

Wolin's critique of the undemocratic character of Heidegger's thinking continues with the by now almost standard confusion of authoritarianism with conformism; this despite Tillich's careful differentiation of the two in *The Courage To Be*.<sup>11</sup> The difference between authoritarianism and conformism can be brought out very easily in terms of the concept of responsibility. When the Nazi state assumed 'responsibility' for, among other things, the German university world, it led to an authoritarianism which stifled thought (when it did not destroy the lives of thinkers). In the university world with which I am familiar, the seemingly opposite tactic (passing the responsibility on to someone else) often leads to a very

similar result. Decisions are taken and specific individuals are affected by these decisions, often adversely, and often for reasons which can be shown conclusively to have been wrong. And yet *no one* can be found who actually took the decision, so nothing can ever be done to rectify the situation. It was always 'someone else'. And that 'someone else' can never be identified in person, since they have always already taken refuge – in the 'They'.

No philosopher has done more than Heidegger not just to identify and characterize this kind of conformist irresponsibility (which is never more evident than in our larger and more impersonal institutions) but also to expose its hidden strength, the grounds for its almost universal dominion. 'It "was" always the "they" who did it, and yet it can be said that it has been "no one"' (SZ, S. 127). 'Everyone is the other, and no one is himself' (SZ, S. 128). 'And because the "they" constantly accommodates the particular Dasein by disburdening it of its Being, the "they" retains and enhances its stubborn dominion' (ibid.).

The best defence against conformist irresponsibility is, of course, the contention that the alternative (collectivist authoritarianism) is even less acceptable, conformism and authoritarianism being thereby represented as mutually exclusive and exhaustive alternatives. But between a situation in which *no one* can be found to take responsibility and a situation in which *one* takes responsibility for *everyone* there is surely room for middle ground, a ground, namely, where *everyone* takes responsibility for his or her *own self*. And this does not mean a self-relation which abstracts from the other. Quite the contrary, the very word 'responsibility' means, in English, the ability to respond (to others). In German, the corresponding word *Verantwortung* contains the component *Antwort*, meaning 'answer', therefore, response to a question, therefore, a dialogical relation. Taking responsibility for oneself therefore means responding to others, treating the other as an end in itself. Nor should this middle ground (between *no one* and *one*) be represented as a kind of compromise between two equally unacceptable, because extreme, alternatives. Rather, this *mean* is itself the extreme, the *ideal* extreme, the extreme which, in any given situation, is never going to be more than partially represented but which can at least be pointed out as a *limiting* ideal, a *regulative idea* (to use the Kantian phrase) which can be worked towards and approximated. And if it is an implication of Heidegger's analysis of the 'They' that this situation does not, or does not at present, obtain, then I am very much afraid that Heidegger is more or less right.

It is not given to us philosophers to be rulers of men, captains of industry, even top-level negotiators and administrators. Our sphere is in one sense a limited one, in another, the most extensive of all. Alfred Whitehead's claim that human civilization is, in the end, the history of its thinkers is, in one sense or another, obviously true; very obviously

true in the sense that human civilization is presently the more or less direct outcome of those advances in our scientific and technological culture which are sponsored in our universities, not so obviously true in the sense that human civilization is likely to take a form determined by the basic attitudes which we humans adopt towards the earth, towards other creatures living on the earth and towards one another, which attitudes are both expressed in, and promoted through, our spiritual culture. The danger (and it is a very real and present danger) is that the neutrality, impartiality, valuelessness, in a word, 'objectivity' (and it matters little that objectivity, in the traditional sense, may today be called in question as a theoretical category) of science and technology will bring with it an *indifference* and even an *utter blindness* to the 'inner truth and greatness' of *existence* in general and *human existence* in particular, thereby affording our more atavistic instincts free and untrammelled rein. When Sartre wrote in 1943: 'there are men who die without – save for brief and terrifying flashes of illumination – ever having suspected what the Other is',<sup>12</sup> he was not indulging in rhetorical fancy but simply recording, in sober prose, a conclusion to which his own *contemporary* experience (of the occupation) had led him.

What is truly astonishing about the academic world of today (the world in which the philosopher is more or less obliged to work) is not the widespread closedness to the call of conscience and therefore the unreadiness to do what is right *because it is right* and for no other reason (with all appropriate qualifications) but *how little* it takes to persuade academics to deviate from courses of action which they know to be right, and whose implicit rightness is attested by their very unreadiness even to discuss (that is, to bring out into the clear realm of explicit discourse) the rights or wrongs of the issue in question.

This basic confusion between authoritarianism and conformism leads on endlessly to further dubious 'political' conclusions. 'The gateway to Heideggerianism as a political philosophy', Wolin writes, 'is the category of "resolve" or (as he puts it) "decisiveness".'<sup>13</sup> Wolin then quite rightly links 'resoluteness' with a suspension of the 'They', prompted by the call of conscience. And he also, to my mind quite rightly, objects to the ambiguity at best, vacuity at worst, not merely of the concept of 'conscience' but also, and as a result, of 'resoluteness'. But from here his analyses make a truly astonishing leap of faith by explicitly connecting 'decisionism' with 'conformism'. 'Not only is decisionism thoroughly unprincipled it is also on this account nakedly opportunistic. And all voluntaristic bluster about "will", "choice" etc., notwithstanding, opportunism in the end reveals itself often enough as a base and simple conformism.'<sup>14</sup> It is this conceptual connection which is then supposed to provide an explanation for Heidegger's mistake. 'The consequences of this decisionistic "ethical vacuity" coupled with the prejudicial nature

of Heidegger's conservative revolutionary degradation of the modern life-world, suggests an undeniable theoretical cogency behind Heidegger's ignominious life choice of 1933.<sup>15</sup>

These consequences follow neither in theory nor in practice. If you look at Heidegger's practical impact in the university environment of his day you find, on the one hand, hosts of former students and younger professors who are ready to attest to Heidegger's supportiveness, encouragement, fair-mindedness etc. (not to mention his regard for work of real quality), while, on the other, you find a few cases in which Heidegger certainly does appear to have criticized a candidate for his Americanization or lack of patriotism or left-wing politics or even his Jewishness, though, with regard to the best known cases (Staudinger/Baumgarten/Hevesey/Fränkell), the criticism appears not to have had any terminal consequences for those at which it was directed. Much more serious (because the victims in this instance were relatively powerless) are the stories of students whose studies Heidegger refused to supervise or approve – because they were Jewish (see especially Rockmore's paper). But it seems that at least Heidegger had enough integrity to give his reasons for reacting in this way. Today, if a university wants to get rid of someone because they are homosexual, or Marxist, or female, or black or Jewish or even (and even especially) because their morality is insufficiently flexible to suit their colleagues, 'they' never so much as hint at *this* as the grounds for dismissal. Instead, the much more successful (because more deceitful) ploy is adopted of condemning the scholarly work of the individual in question. And this ploy is adopted even (and even especially) if the work in question threatens to be *so good* as to make that of its self-appointed judges appear inferior by comparison.

That the consequences mentioned above do not follow in theory either can best be brought out with reference to the following sloganistic caricature of Heidegger's position: 'if authentic Dasein is to lead', Wolin writes, 'inauthentic Dasein must follow.' It sounds plausible, just as long as one remembers to 'forget' the short but extremely dense passages in which Heidegger wrote about solicitude, more specifically the distinction between 'leaping in for him' (*für ihn einspringen*) and 'leaping ahead of him' (*ihm vorausspringen*). I prefer to render these virtually untranslatable phrases in the more characteristically English phraseology of (inauthentic) 'standing in for' and (authentic) 'standing up for'. The authentic individual does not 'stand in for' and so take over the existence of the other. The authentic individual 'stands up for' the other – but only in the sense that he gives back to the other his responsibility for himself. Concretely, this means that so far from declaring: Follow me! the authentic individual is committed to impressing upon the other the importance of the radically different precept: Follow yourself! So Wolin's seemingly plausible exegesis comes down to this: the authentic individual is the one

who deals inauthentically with the inauthentic – as an expression, or attestation, of his very authenticity!

But then how did someone whose thinking, in my view, leads in the very reverse direction from that indicated by Nazi ideology come to associate himself with the Nazi party? I leave it to my contributors to seek an answer to this delicate and complex question. As they are themselves only too well aware, the explanatory hypothesis: 'noble thoughts and dirty deeds' is one which has often been voiced by Heideggerian detractors. For my part, I would simply like to point out that this time-honoured tactic is one which is *all too common* in the contemporary university environment. Professors have plenty of time to indulge in the elaboration of 'noble thoughts'. And these 'noble thoughts' are often very badly needed not merely to alleviate the 'bad conscience' of those engaged in 'dirty deeds' but also to divert attention from the deeds in question.

Professors of philosophy work within the context of a university. The university is a 'world within a world'. Within the confines of this world are gathered activities corresponding to the three primary expressions of the being of human being – thought: corresponding to the domain of the mind, art: corresponding to the domain of feeling, and athletics: corresponding to the domain of the body. A university has its theatres and its orchestras and its art exhibitions as well as its scientific and technological courses, its athletic as well as its social life. And within this privileged 'world within a world' one might even venture to suggest that philosophy enjoys an especially privileged place, a world 'within' a 'world within a world', a world wherein these various expressions of the being of human being are gathered together into one comprehensive understanding of human reality.

Moreover, how philosophers in particular, and academics in general, comport themselves within the privileged frame of what has sometimes been called (usually derogatorily, though I think it is time that the more idealistic, if not idyllic, connotations of this expression were revived) the 'Ivory Tower' can have long lasting implications for those for whom they are responsible. When students witness, within the circuit of their professorial role-models, a pale replica of the marital merry-go-round presently operative in our society at large, when students witness the professorial politics which lead to the dismissal of teachers they know from direct experience to be persons of moral integrity and academic excellence, when students' fees are hiked (or grants slashed) with no comparable improvement in the quality of the education afforded, when students are subjected to arbitrary and unsubstantiated evaluations against which no appeal is permitted, they go out into the world with a conception of life which confirms their worst suspicions, and prepares



them for behaviour which will carry their society on still further in the dis-integrative direction it has already assumed.

All of this is only what was foreshadowed from the very beginning in the Socratic conception of philosophy as a dialogue with the young, a dialogue the topical scope of whose address could not be limited in advance, a dialogue whose purpose was *e-ducation* in the original sense of that word, a *leading out* of the spirit of those addressed, a dialogue whose importance could not be underestimated because it was directed to those at that critical turning point in their lives when they turn away from the original, though limited, framework of the family into the derivative, but more extensive sphere of society at large – to found families of their own. And it is surely more than ‘Socratic’ irony that the charge brought against the man who understood, better perhaps than any other teacher, the *moral* responsibility he assumed in *e-educating* the young should have been that of . . . ‘corrupting the young’.

Perhaps one should leave the last word to Nietzsche.

What provokes one to look at all philosophers half suspiciously, half mockingly, is not that one discovers again and again how innocent they are – how often and how easily they make mistakes and go astray; in short their childishness and childlikeness – but that they are not honest enough in their work, although they all make a lot of virtuous noise when the problem of truthfulness is touched even remotely.<sup>16</sup>

## Notes

1 In the *Spiegel* interview Heidegger claimed that this address was specifically intended to resist the politicization of the University *from without* and to affirm the need for the self-determined responsibility of each university for its own affairs.

2 Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, GA 40; tr. Ralph Manheim as *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), p. 31.

3 Martin Heidegger, ‘Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten’, in *Der Spiegel*, 23, 31 May 1976; reproduced as ‘Only a God can save us: *Der Spiegel*’s interview with Martin Heidegger’, in *Philosophy Today* (1976), p. 272.

4 Tom Rockmore, *Jaspers and Heidegger: Philosophy and Politics*, unpublished paper.

5 It is not the *teachings* of the great religious personalities (many of whom either failed to develop such teachings or made little or no attempt to preserve them in the form of writings) which are responsible for the immense influence they have exerted. It is the exemplary quality of their *life*.

6 I have spent several years researching the social problems to which our contemporary, democratic societies are prone – soaring crime rates, sexual abuse rates, divorce rates, drug addiction rates etc. – together with the by now well-publicized infractions of the ‘men of God’ who inveigh most uncompromisingly,

and most successfully (in money terms), against these very developments. The end result is an informative and eminently readable text *Egoism and the Crisis in Western Values* (based mostly on American data) which is apparently unpublishable in the very societies whose citizens are most affected by these developments, and even though the 'moral' positions assumed are almost banally orthodox – my intention being not to write a moral treatise but to point out the practical consequences of certain quite contemporary ways of thinking about being human. I am consequently in the strange position of watching every one of my social predictions becoming ever more sickeningly true with each passing year, while still being unable to reach the public for whom my predictions might have functioned as a warning.

7 Dominique Janicaud, *L'ombre de cette pensée* (Grenoble: Editions Jérôme Millon, 1990).

8 'Three masters, seemingly mutually exclusive', writes Ricoeur in his *Freud and Philosophy*, 'dominate the school of suspicion: Marx, Nietzsche and Freud.' Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, tr. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 32.

9 Karl Jaspers, *Notizen zu Martin Heidegger* (Piper: München/Zurich, 1989), p. 176.

10 Richard Wolin, *The Politics of Being: The Political Thought of Martin Heidegger* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

11 In my social ontology, I have extended the Sartrian dialectical degeneration in two basic ways; first, and within the sphere of the 'private', I complement the Sartrian analysis of love (degenerating into sado-masochism) with an examination of the degeneration of friendship into indifference (through mutual utilization); second, and within the sphere of the 'public', I draw a further distinction between 'anonymity' and 'autonomy', the first of which leads to conformism, and the second to authoritarianism. This entire analysis is furthermore englobed within the much more comprehensive context of a general theory of empathic relations which, in the end, and through an elaborate series of detours and deviations, makes possible both 'love' and 'friendship', in the sphere of the private, and 'impartiality' and 'propriety', in the sphere of the public.

12 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, tr. Hazel Barnes (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 381.

13 *ibid.*, p. 35.

14 *ibid.*, p. 65.

15 *ibid.*

16 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part One, sect. 5, 'On the prejudices of philosophers'.

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## Heidegger and the thing

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Jean-Pierre Faye

The motivation for action  
will no longer be found exclusively,  
or preponderantly,  
within the domain of fear.

– Jan Patochka

What is the thing? To put it in another way, *when* does Heidegger's *die Frage nach dem Ding* (the 'question concerning the thing') first make its appearance?

We have shown, claimed Heidegger, that the answer to the question 'What is a thing?' can be expressed in the following way: a thing is what supports properties and the truth which corresponds to it is to be found on the side of language – in the proposition as the juncture of a subject with a predicate.<sup>1</sup> This answer is of course only a first approximation which the Heideggerian way will abruptly cast aside.

The question and the answer – or should we say, the encoding of the answer – took place at a definite moment in time. It happens to have been the Winter Seminar of 1935–6, in a course of lectures held at Freiburg University.

This 1935 Winter Seminar follows the path opened up by Heidegger's second great book, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, published in 1929, which itself elaborates a meditation whose first step brings us back to the 1935–6 Winter Semester.

Following the decennial cycle and the seasonal rhythm, we should listen silently to the Heideggerian move, investigating the Black Forest of being – through the clearing of Being. The two English forms of the verb 'to be' give an approximate translation of the German verbal forms, the infinitive and the present participle: *Seiende* and *Sein* – *ens* and *esse* – *on* and *einai* (ὄν and εἶναι).

Yet we shouldn't forget the event of the Summer Semester. Especially the Summer Semester of 1935. Before the luminous path of the 1935–6 Winter Semester, we shall have to deal with the unique darkness of the 1935 Summer Semester. A startling process awaits us, a process which may very well inflict a fatal wound upon our minds.

### Metaphysics vs Nihilism

Curiously enough, it usually passes unnoticed that between the Kant book of 1929 and the Summer Semester of 1935 a deep gap intervenes. Also unnoticed goes the fact that the title given to the 1935 Summer Semester lecture course in 1933 – *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (*Introduction to Metaphysics*) – will mean introducing oneself into an unfathomable abyss (*Abgrund*). The Kant book of 1929 seeks the way to the ground of metaphysics. Its last sequence goes back to *Fundamentalontologie*. *Grund*, *Fundamental* are the main words and also the last words, in §§42–4, of *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*. What could have occurred in the meantime?

In 1929 'Metaphysics' means the surpassing of *Seiende*, of beings. In 1935, metaphysics is itself supposed to stick to *Seiende*, to beings as the object of its quest. So metaphysics must itself be surpassed, through *Überwindung*. What happened in the meantime?

The text of the Winter Seminar opens with a tale told by Plato in the *Theaetetus* (174a), about a little Thracian servant girl who laughs at Thales as he falls into a well, while looking at the stars. Thales' well, which features as an introduction to the Winter Semester course, also figures in the Summer Semester as an *Introduction to Metaphysics*, and tells of some kind of fall – *Verfall*. The question for Heidegger is now: whether we stand in History or whether we are not rather only tottering. (Die Frage . . . ob wir in der Geschichte *stehen* oder nur taumeln.) The answer is: 'Metaphysisch gesehen *taumeln* wir' ('Seen from a metaphysical point of view, we *totter*'). What does this tottering step of metaphysics, as articulated here by Heidegger, mean to us today?

A little further, we should notice another tale which has, up to now, remained unnoted. 'We are also tottering . . . when, more recently, one tries to show that this question of Being . . . is Nihilism' ('Wir taumeln auch dann . . . wenn man sich neuerdings sogar bemüht zu zeigen, dieses Frage nach dem Sein . . . sei Nihilismus').<sup>2</sup> Who is this *one*? Who can this '*man*' be? Let us see if we can discover the one who 'recently', (*neuerdings*), that is before 1935, played the tottering role by interpellating between the two words: '*Metaphysisch*' and '*Nihilismus*'.

The best way to go would be – to listen to the tale. In fact, interviewed

by a French reviewer, Heidegger himself did add a few details,<sup>3</sup> speaking about a Nazi aggressor called 'Krieg', 'Kriegh' or 'Kriegk'. . . . It could be said that French philosophers are not concerned with the *problem of names*? So this *one* could simply be christened with the letter K.

In fact, the letter K may bring us to another narration which bears the whole K signature. But the problem which then occurs is how far a 'tale' can be taken into account *inside* a philosophical discourse – not as a break in the discursive network, as the *mythos* breaking the thread of the Platonic *logos* – or the reference to the 'infinite fly' in the Spinoza ethics – but as the arrow of language hitting the core of another language.

### The K postulate

The K attack on 'the meaning of Heidegger's philosophy' was to label it as a *metaphysischer Nihilismus*. To assign the predicate 'metaphysical' to the noun phrase 'Nihilism' is to announce the very philosophical problem which remains the 'unthought', the *Ungedacht*, standing in the way of Heidegger's path in the forest. It finds its zero hour at the very moment when what we shall call the K postulate is uttered.

It should now be said straight away that this 'K' is not to be aligned with the Kafka hero. We shall discover his identity as a *völkische*<sup>4</sup> militant who joined the Nazi party and will become an Obmann of Nazi 'science' – let us say a corporal or a sergeant-major. Later on, an SS Obersturmbannführer. In 1934, he becomes the Rector of Frankfurt University.

But the K postulate involves a corollary. 'Metaphysical Nihilism' says K – 'as it used to be presented to us, mostly by Jewish Literati'<sup>5</sup> – ('wie es sonst vornehmlich von jüdischen Literaten bei uns vertreten worden war'). The fatal corollary allows Heidegger no reply; in 1934, no one is permitted to raise the question whether or not he deserves to be called a Jew. Yet the tale of K includes a Scolia: Heidegger's so-called 'Nihilism' belongs to a long stream of thought, flowing from Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas: from the 'Greek doctrine of Being' – (*die griechische Seinslehre*). On this basis, Heidegger did build up some kind of an answer to the K attack. It is not the *Seinslehre* but, on the contrary, the 'forgetting of Being' – *die Seinsvergessenheit* – which is the source of all evil, the mother of Nihilism. In this case the corollary may be transformed. There must be no further allusions to 'Jewish *Literaten*'. Even the Greeks, the creators of ontology, have to be rejected,<sup>6</sup> must no longer be alluded to. From now on, the Heideggerian task will be to prove that the Greeks are already guilty of the so-called 'forgetting' of *Sein* – now considered as the equivalent of 'metaphysics'.

However, 'there's the rub!' – for our Hamlet. In his first great book,

*Sein und Zeit*, it was clearly stressed that, since the Greeks, the task of philosophy has been *Sein*, beginning with Plato's *Parmenides* and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Book Z. In *Being and Time* and, at a different level, through the analytics of existence, the oblivion of *Sein* is the fall into 'average everydayness' – *Alltäglichkeit*. This is the *verfallen* of the everyday mode of existence.

Heidegger's new task, after 1934, will have to be the discovery of the 'proof' of the *Fall*, stemming as it does from the Greeks. In other words, the K postulate will have to be transformed into some kind of an H theorem. Nevertheless, such a careful Heideggerian disciple as Jacques Derrida emphasized the method (or the manner) in all sorts of Heideggeriana: no 'argument' or 'refutation' is needed – 'disqualifying' is enough. . . . This kind of strategy will prove to be very efficient in the pursuit of the process we are learning to uncover, as attested by the disciples of the 'discovery'. It is therefore worth investigating with exact attention, for it involves a real inversion of the method of 'investigation', pertaining, as it does, to the surprising Athenian word *philosophia*.

After 1934, the new accent will be placed upon the 'falling out of *Sein*'. No longer an everyday affair, but an original sin, which proceeds further and grows ever worse throughout the entire course of History. This gnostic reinterpretation of the Tora account (the biblical narrative) about the Paradise of the Garden of Eden was handed down through German 'revolutionary conservatism', mainly along the Wagnerian path. For Houston Chamberlain, Wagner's Wagnerian son-in-law and 'thinker' in Bayreuth, *Geschichte als Verfall*<sup>7</sup> (history as the Fall), is taken for granted. This language appears for the first time in Heideggerian speech during the Summer Semester of 1935, as the first answer to the K denunciation of 1934 – and the first tacit *acceptance* of the K postulate. But making the K postulate *acceptable* will prove to be a long process and will be undertaken with a view to changing it into an H theorem, using for this purpose the strategic means of 'disqualification'.

The first version of the new Heideggerian doctrine, in the 1935 Summer Semester, is quite dramatic. It was abruptly delivered by way of a question: 'does our falling out of Being come from *Sein* itself, from language, or from ourselves?'

'*Dass wir . . . aus dem Sein herausgefallen sind?*'<sup>8</sup> It is we who have fallen out of Being. And the tale goes on: 'from the beginning on, it has made its way through Western history' ('was von Anfang an durch die abendländische Geschichte zieht'). 'An event', Heidegger goes on, 'which the eyes of historians will never catch sight of' ('ein Geschehnis, zu dem alle Augen aller Historiker nie hinreichen werden'), and yet it is that which was before, is now, and will be hereafter ('und das doch geschieht, vormals, heute und künftig').<sup>9</sup> This event which no historian could ever grasp is supposed to be the key to the whole of history:

*Geschichte* of course and not mere *Historie*. As far back as Heroditus himself, the severe linguocentrism of Heidegger's discourse excludes ἱστορίη – the first word in the world's first book of 'history'. Of course, the knowledge that pertains to this kind of 'original' history is *mythology* (Wissen von einer Ur-geschichte . . . ist . . . Mythologie).<sup>10</sup> So we have to direct our investigations towards the new Heideggerian labyrinth of mythology, starting from 1935.

### The predicate event

The track left by the 1935 Summer Semester leads us straight on to the *event* of the predicate, as an unhappy ending. To remain in the 'forgetfulness' of Sein (In der Vergessenheit des Seins) . . . 'this is nihilism'.<sup>11</sup> We must add: the 'forgetting of Sein' is also the 'simple exercise of Seiende' – and the later process suddenly becomes the new definition of 'Metaphysik'.

In a carefully thought-out essay of 1929, *Vom Wesen des Grundes* (reprinted in 1934 without a change), metaphysics meant precisely the 'surpassing of *Seiende*'. Now *metaphysisch gesehen*<sup>12</sup> is synonymous with a simple exercise and 'enterprise' – *Betrieb* – alongside of *Seiende*. Hereafter 'the first step' will be the 'overcoming of nihilism' ('der erste Schritt . . . zur . . . Überwindung des Nihilismus').<sup>13</sup> Soon equivalent to the 'overcoming of Metaphysics': 'Überwindung der Metaphysik'<sup>14</sup> – as can be seen from the postscript in 1943 to the 1929 lecture: *What is Metaphysics?*

In the lectures on Nietzsche from 1936 to 1945, later collected in the huge Nietzsche book, a clear light is thrown upon the new topic: '*Die Metaphysik ist . . . der eigentliche Nihilismus*'.<sup>15</sup> During the post-war period, the 1955 homage to Ernst Jünger puts it more and more in spatial terms: 'the essential place of nihilism is shown to be the essence of metaphysics' (als Wesensort des Nihilismus das Wesen der Metaphysik). At the time, the event of the predicate was fulfilled and Heidegger was able to help it through the uneasy moment of the collapse of the Third Reich on 4 November 1945. In his letter to the new Rector of the University of Freiburg, nihilism is no longer referred to *Jüdischen Literaturen*, but is referred hereafter to 'the political form of fascism'.<sup>16</sup>

*Scheu, Angst* – fear and anguish are the words used in the 1943 Postscript<sup>17</sup> – and what could be more fearful than the storm of the *Obersturmbann*? Yet all is forgotten in Winter 1945 when he now talks of a fight against fascism in its 'political form'.

## Being and being

When we make use of an English translation of Heidegger's terms which attempts to come to terms with his principal problem, the unavoidable question arises: how to translate the 'essential' *difference* between *Sein* and *Seiende*. Strangely enough, for a language stemming from Saxon sources, this difference is unperceivable in English, since the infinitive 'to be' can hardly be used to translate the infinitive-substantive: *das Sein*/το εἶναι/*essell'*être; and so will usually be replaced with the participle 'being' (with a capital B). Some of the earliest and most daring pioneers in the art of transforming Heideggerian German into English tried to circumvent the difficulty by rendering *Sein* (infinitive) as *Being* and *Seiende* (participle) as *being*.<sup>18</sup> Who would have presumed to ask them, or indeed to ask the master himself, whether the greatest question in the whole of History (*Geschichte*, of course) could be solved by invoking the simple difference between a capital B and a small b? Certainly, the necessity of avoiding the *Verfall* into nihilism – more precisely, into *metaphysischer Nihilismus* – will give us the courage to face such a risk, using as our only weapon the B/b difference. The *Fall* from B to b may then be described as the 'fundamental event', the *Grundgeschehen* in the sense of the Summer Semester Lecture of 1935. Was it really the best way to escape the K attack and the effects of the K postulate? The 'fundamental event' as an answer brings us to the point where a new gnosis has been founded, a new secret doctrine of a Fall throughout History.

Should we then be grateful to the author of the K postulate who enabled us to discover such a measure and thus opened the way to a new salvation through the H theorem? Though *Obmann Kriek*, the scientific sergeant-major, hardly measures up to the criterion of serious philosophical discourse, are we not indebted to his linguistic discovery (or better, his invention): the event of the predicate?

A connoisseur might object: surely the author of the K postulate is really a genuine philosopher who goes by the name of Friedrich Nietzsche? Heidegger's *Nietzsche* book, with its 1500 pages, seems to offer the most convincing proof of this allegation. Unfortunately for this claim, in the finest fragments of Nietzsche's *Nachlass*, a clear distinction is drawn between the time of metaphysics and the time of nihilism, with its three phases – the first phase, the 'extreme' phase and then the phase of 'active' nihilism.<sup>19</sup> The sixteen sequences written on the way to Sils Maria, in Lenzer Heide,<sup>20</sup> on 10 June 1887, are developed in the form of a sort of musical refutation of Heidegger's huge *Nietzsche* book. However, the book can in itself be read as a gigantic laboratory in which the future is concocted with a view to pressing the investigation through



to the time of the greatest danger – from 1936 to 1945 – in the uncanny light of the K postulate.

### The Heidegger *alagon*

In the space of philosophical discourse, the encounter between the K postulate and the H theorem can remind us of what was said in the Aristotelian *Poietike* about the meeting of Laios and Oedipus outside the narration, the *mytheuma*, which is displayed in the Sophoclean tragedy – *exo tou mytheuma*: this ‘outside’ is described as an *alagon*. The very word *alagon* which is used in Greek geometry, inclusive of Plato’s *Meno*, to describe the incommensurable proportion between the side of a square and its diagonal. In the series of natural numbers, the irrational number means the break in the set of rational numbers: two infinite series of rational fractional numbers approach this *coupure*. Infinite sets of ‘reasons’ bring Oedipus and Laos to the point where they meet face to face. Yet this point is an *alagon*.

The K and H encounter is an *alagon*, in this sense, one which resides inside the language of philosophical discourse. There is no other reported dialogue between K and H at this point in their relationship – in spite of their having been together before, in 1933. For example, both campaigned in the Nazi KADH<sup>21</sup> organization as Rectors – at the Universities of Frankfurt and Freiburg respectively. The mutual defiance of 1934–5 is never the field of a bilateral recognition. The K aggression is only alluded to by Heidegger, first in the 1935 Summer Semester as ‘*man . . . neuerdings*’ (‘one . . . recently’). Then it is alluded to again in the 1943 Postscript, the so-called Nachwort to *What is Metaphysics?* as ‘blind polemics’ (*verblindete Polemik*). Each time he is dealing with ‘nihilism’ and ‘metaphysics’ and their presupposed relationship.

It is obvious that the two words are often employed as variables in the frame of Nietzsche’s language – but they are not supposed to meet in a predicative relationship. Moreover, they are often very clearly opposed, as in the Lenzer Heide suite: the Nietzsche sonata. The *predicate event* arises through the K and H encounter at the intersection of two series of languages, one of which (the *metaphysische*) comes from the code label inserted by Bicolaos Damaskus as a Scolia concluding the Theophrastos: τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά, ‘the books after the Physics’. This sequence of words is fully preserved in the Cordoban school of Arabic philosophy, mainly by Ibn Rochd (Averroes), as *ba’d al-tabiah*,<sup>22</sup> running parallel to ‘*metafisika*’. The Latin translations of Averroes and Aristotle by Michael Scot of Edinburgh, in the thirteenth century, finally introduces the noun phrase ‘*metaphysica*’ into the European lexicon. As for Nihilism, it seems to appear occasionally during the French Revolution,

for instance in a sentence from the German member of the Convention Anacharsis Cloots (it is used there in a 'positive' sense). And later on by Jacobi. But as a lexical term with a specifically 'negative' meaning, it appears abruptly with Turgenyev and Dostoyevsky. There is little to say about what could be common to Michael Scot from Balwearie in the county of Fife, Scotland in his *Metaphysica Nova* or his *Theatrum chemicum* (thirteenth century), on the one hand, and the characters of Bazarov and Verkhovensky in the Russian novel, between 1860 and 1880, on the other. The handling of the two variables by the K and the H postulate or theorem belongs to a questionable *coupure* in language – at the crossroads of a narrative *alolon*, in a sense near to the *Poietike* analysis of the Oedipus *mytheuma*.

Richard Rorty rightly defines as *incommensurable*<sup>23</sup> some kinds of philosophical discourse, among which he places the later Heidegger. We should say, the *alolon* draws its figures outside the *mytheuma*, in the space where K and H meet at the fracture – *à la coupure*. The point of encounter 'outside the narrative' is not outside History as a complex space, *nor is it outside the philosophical Problematic*.

The enigma of the 'later Heidegger' is written here on the edge of the narrative compass. This does not mean that it will not involve a momentous display of what Nietzsche calls the *Machtquantum*. Quite the contrary. The fight for *Macht*, the ferocious struggle for power and the praise of terror – *Schrecken des Ungebändigten*<sup>24</sup> (the Terror of the Unbounded) – are here at their climax. At the very moment when the 1935 Summer Semester comes to an end, proclaiming the 'inner truth and greatness' of the Nazi movement (die innere Wahrheit und Grösse dieser Bewegung).<sup>25</sup> Then the line of the *alolon* is cut. As incommensurable.

### The Terror of the Unbounded

Hazy in many ways is the question concerning the relationship between 'politics and philosophy', a question which was deliberately kept in the dark by Heidegger. The debate always springs up anew: is Heidegger guilty? Should we organize a Heidegger trial? Even the answer can take the form of a question: should we conduct Socrates' trial over again? Does the indicted philosopher need defending? . . .

In my opinion we should try to get out of this *circulus vitiosus*. What is puzzling is the way in which the tumultuous vortex of the historical turmoil penetrates through to the language of thought. The *Confession* of November 1933 – *Bekenntnis zu Adolf Hitler und dem nationalsozialistischen Staat* – describes the new situation: 'Not to shut ourselves out of the Terror<sup>26</sup> of the Unbounded and the Chaos of the obscure' (Sich

nicht verschliessen dem Schrecken des Ungebändigten und der Wirrnis des Dunkels). Important is the second phasis, when the *Wirrnis des Dunkels* assails Heidegger himself – indicting him as a ‘Jew’. . . . The result of this story is our problem here; starting from this point in time, how does the Nazi narration about the *Verfall* or the *Untergang* of European history get accepted? The Summer Semester and the *Nietzsche* lectures attest to this protracted moment of rendering acceptable.

## The Great Return

Truly the *Bekenntnis* is already a philosophical text. Here we find the key terms of *Sein und Zeit* being used to come to terms with the language of the Nazi movement: *Sein*, *Seiende*, *Dasein*, *Wesen* make friends with *völkisch*, *Volksgenosse*, *Volksgemeinschaft*. . . . And the ‘turning back towards the essence of Being’ (nach dem Wesen des Seins wiederkehren) is described as equivalent to the *nationalsozialistische Revolution*. . . . But the second phase goes further, into the depths of the *Wirrnis*. What is at stake is then the politicizing of the whole process of philosophy, since the Greeks, translated into the Nazi or the ‘revolutionary conservative’ mythology of the Fall, the *Verfall*. The so-called ‘ontological difference’ between *Being* and *being* – to *einai* and to *on/esse* and *ens/être* and *étant/Sein* and *Seiende* – suddenly becomes the clue to the whole of History, right up to the instance of the new *Aufbruch* and by way of the *Wiederkehren* which is brought about by the ‘movement’. Even after 1945, Heidegger admits to having taken a positive stand with regard to the ‘movement’ (not the ‘party’ . . .). The Nazi movement is supposed to initiate the turning around – from being to Being. Thomas Mann described the Great Return, *das grosse Zurück*, as the premonitory symptom of Nazi mythologies.

Perilous is the distortion which this will bring about, even with regard to the mere understanding of philosophical terminology. Aristotle is once again accused – of having ‘forgotten’ *Sein* and privileged *Seiende*. Even though it was he who first clearly and accurately distinguished the two uses of the same verb. In Book Alpha of the so-called *Metaphysics*<sup>27</sup> comes the first insisting reference to the verb used as an infinite noun-phrase. ‘In each thing there is as much Being as there is truth.’<sup>28</sup> In Book Gamma we find the definition of *to on* (τὸ ὄν): being as the object, no longer Being and the light of truth. *Sein* comes before *Seiende* in the axiomatic books of the ‘foremost philosopher’.

This Athenian clarity then fell into the dark abyss of *Wirrnis* and remained there from 1935 until the ‘testament’ of 1966. This is both the target and the victim of the predicate event of 1934. The *Letter on Humanism*, addressed to Jean Beaufret in 1946 and distributed in French

philosophical circles as a world message, conveys the last word: even 'ethics' are a symptom of *Verfall* and *vergehen*,<sup>29</sup> as a result of which the thought of origins falls apart. As a final Act to the Third Reich play, this conclusion, delivered in 1946, would be sheerly ironic were it not for the fact that it was spoken with prophetic earnestness. In French philosophical circles at any rate, this message was taken seriously. For Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, 'Auschwitz reveals the West'.<sup>30</sup> Should we not be thankful – in this case to the Heideggerian clue – for having been taught that the Nazi massacres were the true heirs of the great rational tradition of philosophy from the Greeks down to the time of the Enlightenment? Or to extend the scale still further, 'from Anaximander to Nietzsche'?<sup>31</sup>

Of course, the Nazi ideologues knew perfectly well that their real target was precisely the Western 'heroism of reason' – as Edmund Husserl said in Vienna in 1935, before going back to Freiburg, into the tiger's mouth. But the change of language<sup>32</sup> from the K postulate to the H theorem worked well enough to invert responsibility. Since 'Anaximander' – and on the whole since Athens – Heidegger would consequently be the sole philosopher *not* to have been guilty of the Nazi liability! At least if we accept the argument of his epigonal inheritance.

On the eve of 1989, the final revelation in this line of thought emerged: 'totalitarianism, nazism and racism', on the one hand, 'human rights and democracy', on the other, were both masked by a common 'contamination' and 'complicity', since they are both related to the same 'metaphysical gesture'.<sup>33</sup> Seldom has the abyss been so thoroughly vacuous. With Heidegger and his heirs we can now truly explore the *Inferno* of the twentieth century's deepest danger. Provided (since we are still onlookers) that we don't become believers. 'Greatness', if such there be, could *not* pertain to the 'movement', not even to the philosopher himself, notwithstanding his poetical aura. It could only assume the perilous form of the curative power of poison – as a *pharmakon* perhaps.

Not only have the Gods withdrawn, philosophical irony itself – effective from Zeno to Nietzsche – has been obliterated by the K/H postulate.

### **From danger to deconstruction**

'It is in the time of greatest danger that philosophers arrive on the scene.' The *Nietzsche* book opens with this Nietzschean quotation. What does Heidegger mean in 1936 with such a hint? Karl Löwith meets him in Rome, the same year, wearing the Nazi crooked cross, the swastika, on his jacket. In reply to Löwith's question, he confirms that his own philosophy does in fact conform to the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*.

The Nietzschean danger! Nietzsche himself experiments with the

emergence of such a shadow in his own thinking. Against his own 'declaration of war', he foresees a 'party of peace . . . soon to be the Grand party', a 'party of the oppressed'. He denounces the *plump Canaille* and the *Canaille* of the newborn Anti-Semite Party. Not Nietzsche but Martin Heidegger is a convinced ally of the Nazi movement.

So what does the danger mean? Is it *what* the Nazi movement is supposed to heal – as poison carries its own cure within itself? What does Heidegger really mean when he concludes the Summer Semester course of lectures with 'the inner truth and greatness of the movement'. Does his reproducing the sentence in book form in 1953 mean that he still believes in this 'truth and greatness'? Is he still alluding to the same reality? At the time this very question was raised by Jürgen Habermas in *Die Zeit*; a student at that time, his boldness was to cost him dear in the course of his career in the academic establishment.

Confronting the problem, we are obliged to try and carry through some kind of Copernican Revolution. But we shall have to ask the philosopher what he calls the 'outer' danger.

Describing *the danger itself*, we can note *how it questions philosophy as such*. The 'inner side' of its answer assumes the form of a temporal frame through which we can enter the abyss. The Summer Semester, the *Nietzsche* book, even the *Question Concerning the Thing* but mainly the post-war Homage or *Festschrift* dedicated to Ernst Jünger<sup>34</sup> would then furnish the rooms in which we might try to decipher the hieroglyph of the European catastrophe.

Among the above, the Jünger *Festschrift*<sup>35</sup> provides us with a privileged clue. Speaking about the author of *Total Mobilization*<sup>36</sup> and *The Worker*<sup>37</sup> – in which a 'total Dictatorship' is both envisaged and announced – Heidegger comes back to the movement which will 'win back the original experience of *Sein*'<sup>38</sup> and which will subvert 'Metaphysics' as the *Wesens-ort* (essential locus) of 'Nihilism'.

This is what Heidegger calls *Abbau* and what the French translators and commentators will name deconstruction. Neither the English<sup>39</sup> nor the Spanish translators,<sup>40</sup> for example, seem to have hit upon such an ambiguous monster of non-thought.

Never had the event of the unfolding of the predicate ensnared such a puzzling wonder. Or displayed such a potent weapon. The experience of Being (*Sein*) having to 'win its way back [*zurückgewinnen*] up the slope of being [*Seiende*]' had managed in the meantime to realize the 'reconquest', an event already foreseen in 1945 by a distressed Heidegger. The Deconstruction fable has not only become, according to Tony Wolfe, a fashionable slogan in Manhattan, capable of competing with his own white woollen socks in a TV debate. It also seems to have been the Trojan horse thanks to which the Heideggerian discourse would eventually be permitted entrance to the New World, as a respectable sample

of continental philosophy. Did the 'closedness of metaphysics' open up a new frontier?

It is also likely that the accusations launched against 'metaphysical' language would appear congruent with the empirically oriented Anglo-American tradition – if we forget Whitehead's second philosophy. In the same way, we could see disappointed Marxist/Leninists accepting the destruction/deconstruction of metaphysics . . . regardless of a tragedy whose effect was to consign logical positivism, Marxist–Hegelian dialectic and neo-Kantianism to the purgatory of 'metaphysics' – to which science itself should also be added as the exclusive preoccupation with, or the obsessive pursuit of, *Seiende*.

### Poetics and venom

Looking back over our shoulders it is difficult to avoid feeling some sort of regret. Rediscovering the gloss of *Dichter–Denken*, the implication of poetical language in the blooming of philosophical thought from the Ionians to Hölderlin, we have to admit that our thankfulness to Heidegger cannot allow us to forget the long-range venomous effect of the K postulate, lying as it does at the very heart of the predicate event. Deconstruction then turns out to be the second phase of dissimulation. The *Abbau/Verborgenheit* game was actually a winner-take-all, seen through 'spectacles made up out of the scrap metal of 1934–5'.

Predicate or event, wrote Leibniz, quoted here by Deleuze. In the discourse of classical metaphysics, the event itself is implicated in the analytical unfolding of predicative positions, inside the divine understanding. There is certainly no point in going back to the infinite intellect. It is the linguistic effect of a predicative indictment which brings us to the threshold of a new space of investigation. Narration itself, as a cognitive act. Narration is a (*g*)*narus*, and primarily a *gnoscens*, the first glance of knowledge or *gignoskein* glimpsed through the act of reporting action and lighting up – could we say, the glade? – of narration, amid a vibrating universe. This movement of thought finds a field of exploration within the folds of Heidegger's *Stoffwechsel* – if we may use Hölderlin's word.<sup>41</sup> The 'stuff change' in question here is worth investigating.

Hölderlin, Rilke, Trakl, Rimbaud seem to move close to Parmenides and Heraclitus in the Heideggerian track. We have to take these pieces out of the jigsaw puzzle and, in the wink of an eye, listen to the Parmenidean enigma: ἐὼν ἔμμεναι 'to be being'. In Book Alpha of the Aristotelian text, we hear the harmony of a proportion: ὡς ἔχει τοῦ εἶναι, οὕτω καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας.

### Vibration and navigation

Not the 'oblivion of Being' but, on the contrary, the first enlightenment of language in the ability to speak that which is; this is the Greek venture, working its way and then travelling on from Ionia to Italy – and so on to Athens. Not a *Vergessenheit* or *vergehen* through a 'Western Fall' but a voyage of thought towards an Eastern heart of the debate, from Harran and Koufa to Boukhara and Farab. In Alfarabi's poetics and work on music – *Kitab al-Musiqā* – the vibration of the voice in poetic song comes to the invention of musical organs, a kind of expansion of the body itself into a first experiment in what will become, between Samos and Croton, the birth of acoustics – the first physics in its first phase. The long way of philosophical *disputatio* is indeed a path of thought, moving from *τό εἶναι* to the Arabic *wujud*, towards *esse* and *Sein*. The Heideggerian mythology of the 'oblivion of *Sein*', is actually the obliteration of the passage by which the working out of thought discovers its horizon through the hazard of history. 'Hazard' happens to be an Arabic word and horizon a Greek vocable. This network of active languages was woven into Greek, Arabic, Hebraic and Latin – long before it came to the Western European pentagon of languages, forgetting none of the five: Italian, Spanish, French, English, German. The Greek/German scheme as a *direct* transmission of the philosophical impulse is a typical *völkish* model, driving away the so-called *Fremdwörter*. The complete omission by Heidegger of the universe of English poetical and philosophical language, as that of a Latin-German tongue, is also very characteristic. Yet is Kant thinkable without the philosophical moment of Hume? No road leads straight from Parmenides to the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, the target of detailed commentaries in *Die Frage nach dem Ding*.<sup>42</sup> The Greek alpha/bet is itself named after two hebraic words, and its system of signs was forged from the time of the sumero/akkadian superimposition. The library of Sippar,<sup>43</sup> between Babylon and Baghdad, recently discovered by an English-Iraqi archaeological excavation into the clay of time, stands testimony to such a tangle. Out of which emerges what Athenian philosophy has named the *noos poietikos* (poetic intellect). And through the travelling labour of the Rochd/Michael Scot attempt at a translation of the *subjectum movens*, the name of the *denkende Subjekt* in Kant's *Kritik* is hammered out and inscribed. From Asia and North Africa to Arabian Spain, Scotland, southern Italy and Sicily – through Paris on the Montagne Sainte Geneviève, Oxford, Cologne, Padua, Naples.

The *Irrnis*, the wandering discovery about the *subjectum* through the tale of Being is to be found *here*, in the working space of transformations such as these. As a landmark, the Heideggerian Winter Semester on 'The Thing' could appear as an important and beautiful piece of work –

were it not at the same time a strategic piece in the game play initiated by the K and the H postulate. Indeed the 'little book on the small question' – what is a thing? – deals very cautiously with the background relevant to its inquiry. For it aims at the 'Advent', the 'great beginning of the question among the Greeks',<sup>44</sup> the historical – or 'historial' – 'position of Kant in the womb of metaphysics'.<sup>45</sup> The caution expressed in the 1935–6 lectures 'about the Thing' make it a great book, located as it is in the gap between the 1935 Summer Semester and the first 1935 lectures relating to the *Nietzsche* book. At the end of chapter XIII of Part A, Heidegger notes: 'if we don't pay attention to the Danger signal inscribed upon a high voltage electric line, we die; if we turn a deaf ear to the question: what is a thing? nothing happens'.

Precisely, 'that which happened in Europe' – if we bear in mind the words of Adorno's *Minima morali* – did occur when the Danger signal was set off. But the philosopher ignored the signal, or was too obtuse to take note of the thing that manifested itself through language – and within the reality of history – between the years 1933 and 1945.

Existence is not a real predicate for a thing, insisted Kant. A hundred possible thalers are not 'more' than a hundred real thalers. . . . In his *Kants Lehre* book, Heidegger insists on this: Being-present is not a predicate. The same *quidity*, the same *res*, the same *Dingheit* is there for the possible just as well as for the actual thing.

Yet the predicate did itself overturn the 'reality' of the Thing through the predicative event, or better *Advent*, which changed the Nietzschean *antiphrasis* of the Lenzer Heide sonata into the *cataphasis* of the K and the H postulate. If 'occidental-metaphysical' is the predicate of 'Nihilism' – and if 'Nihilism' (forgetting its 1934 equivalence with 'jüdischen Literaturen') becomes the 1945 'political form of fascism' – then even in this extreme case, does it still make sense to say that 'Auschwitz reveals the Occident?' We know that it *was* actually said.<sup>46</sup> Yet Nazi ideological language in its entirety is a cruel offensive against 'Western' *abendländische* thought, from Descartes to Locke and Rousseau.

But even if it were possible to assert that the whole philosophical ('metaphysical') trend of the West implies the industrial massacre in Auschwitz-Birkenau, this could just as well be a way of saying *either* that this renders the process which leads to Auschwitz 'acceptable' *or* that 'nothing' actually happened at Auschwitz. Moreover it is also possible to find critical expositions which fluctuate between these two positions.<sup>47</sup> Quite recently, one finds a statement to the effect that 'even if Heidegger had killed ten million people with his own hands, this wouldn't change the true value of his doctrine'.<sup>48</sup>

At this point in time, the story of the historical present is not a simple 'object' which could be investigated by the philosopher. It is the gravi-



tational field of the narrative which itself questions *philosophia* and never ceases to encompass it with questions. At this very moment we may nevertheless hear some sort of signal being given off within the acoustics of the poetical aura and the philosophical strife. That of peril.

## Notes

1 *Die Frage nach dem Ding. Zu Kants Lehre von den Transzendentalen Grundsätzen* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1962). This book – *The Question about the Thing* – is the text of lectures given during the Winter Semester of 1935–6 at the University of Freiburg.

2 *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 2nd edn (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1953), 5. 155.

3 *Les Temps Modernes*, 1946. L'Herne: Heidegger, ed. Michel Haar (Paris: L'Herne, 1983).

4 The *Grimms Wörterbuch* and the *Brockhaus* explain this word, used by Heidegger's *Bekenntnis zu Adolf Hitler* in 1933, as meaning the *Rassengegensatz gegen die Juden* or the *Rassengedanken*, more precisely, an *antisemite Nationalismus*.

5 *Volk im Werden*, 4, 1934: Ernst Krieck, *Germanischer Mythos und Heideggersche Philosophie*. (Literati is the derogatory synonym for a writer, like the French word 'littérateur'. It is directed here at both Heine and . . . Husserl, the spiritual father of Heidegger.)

6 In 1940, Rektor K, the scientific *Obmann*, will renew his attack on Heidegger with the following imperative: 'Deliver us from the ontologers . . . (*Volk im Werden*, October 1940).

7 H. S. Chamberlain, *Richard Wagner*.

8 *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, S. 28.

9 *ibid.*

10 *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, S. 110.

11 *ibid.*, S. 155.

12 *ibid.*, S. 154.

13 *ibid.*, S. 155.

14 *Was ist Metaphysik?*, 1943, Nachwort.

15 Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961), 2. Band, S. 343.

16 L'Herne, *Cahier Heidegger*, ed. Michel Henry (Paris: L'Herne, 1983), p. 102.

17 Postscript to *What is Metaphysics?*

18 See *The Question of Being*, tr. W. Kluback and Jean T. Wilde (New Haven: Twayne Publishers, 1958).

19 Schopenhauer, Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche himself.

20 Cf. Jean-Pierre Faye, *La raison narrative* (Editions Balland, 1990), Livre VII, 'La sonate de Lenzer Heide'.

21 Kulturpolitische Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutschen Hochschullehrer, founded in 1933.

22 In the *Tafsir Kitab ma ba'd at-tabiah*, *The Great Commentary on Metaphysics*, written in 1190. It is a Western illusion which brings Heidegger to denounce 'metaphysics' as 'occidental', thereby forgetting its long migration through central Asia and North Africa.

23 *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 368–70.

24 Martin Heidegger, *Bekenntnis zu Adolf Hitler und dem Nationalsozialistischen Staat*, Dresden, November 1933.

25 *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, S. 152.

26 According to François Fedier's attempt at a translation, *Schrecken* should here be taken to mean the somewhat old German *scricken*, that is, 'the leap of Dasein before Sein'. This nice pun seems to forget that for Hegel *Schrecken* means *Terror*.

27 The word, as we have seen, entered the philosophical lexicon only during the twelfth century, through the Averroist school. The term is not to be found in a Greek dictionary.

28 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book Alpha, 1.

29 To fail, to lose, to perish, to fall into ruin.

30 Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Fiction du politique*, 1988.

31 *Einleitung in Was ist Metaphysik?*

32 'My intention was to attempt to undertake a spiritual transformation from within national socialism.' Letter to the President of the Political Committee, end 1945 (cf. L'Herne: Heidegger, 1982, p. 104).

33 J. Derrida, *De l'esprit*, 1987, p. 65. And Heidegger, *questions ouvertes*, Cahiers du College international de philosophie, 1987.

34 *Zur Seinsfrage (About the Question of Being)*. Formerly called *About the Line (Of Nihilism)*, 1955.

35 Title: *Freundschaftliche Begegnungen, Festschrift für Ernst Jünger* (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1955).

36 Published in *Krieg und Krieger (War and Warriors)*, 1930.

37 *Der Arbeiter*, 1932.

38 *The Question of Being*, tr. W. Kluback and J. T. Wilde, pp. 92-3.

39 The Kluback and Wilde translation of 1958 proposed 'abandonment'.

40 Who propose: 'derribo'. (*Sorbe la cusion del Ser*, tr. German Bleiberg (Madrid, 1958).)

41 'Die Verfahrungsweise des poetischen Geistes' (in Homburg Essays), 1979. Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke* (Stuttgart, 1962), 4. Bd.

42 Subtitle: *Zu Kants Lehre von den Transzendentalen Grundsätze* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1962).

43 From whose name we get the Hebrew word *Sepher*, the book. And the Arabic word *Cifr*, the number zero.

44 *Die Frage nach dem Ding*, A, XIII.

45 *ibid.*, B, I.

46 Cf. Lacoue-Labarthe, *Fiction du politique*.

47 Jean Beaufret's letter to Robert Faurisson, the absolute denial of genocide, appears as a token of this possibility. Recently, a publication curiously named *Krisis* (Director: Alain de Benoist) ended in Heideggerian exaltation, and in a way which intersected with Faurissonian 'revisionism'.

48 Cf. the review *Krisis*, No. 1, 1988.

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## Heidegger's Nazism and the French debate

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Tom Rockmore

Any thinker who departs from the previous discussion in a significant manner, who displaces the discussion, for instance through the introduction of different categories, a new approach to a problem in the debate, in practice any important thinker requires a process of reception in order to assimilate and evaluate novel insights. The process of reception required for Heidegger is also necessary for such other important contemporary thinkers as Quine and Wittgenstein, Russell and Husserl. The unprecedented difference with respect to Heidegger is that alone among major thinkers in this century Heidegger was a Nazi.

Heidegger's penchant for Nazism has seriously affected discussion of his thought. It would certainly be interesting to sketch the Heidegger reception in general, in practice an enormous task. Even more than Wittgenstein and Lukács, Heidegger is perhaps the most influential philosopher in this century. His thought has impacted directly and indirectly on an enormous number of writers, in philosophy and in other fields. It would be useful to discuss Heidegger's reception in French thought in general, where he has had a particularly significant following.<sup>1</sup> It would also be interesting to consider the reception of Heidegger's Nazism in general since it became public knowledge in the Rectoral address in 1933. The more limited aim of this paper is to consider the reception of Heidegger's Nazism in the French philosophical discussion. The French discussion is specifically interesting for its length and intensity. It is further interesting as so far the richest source of the main lines of criticism and defence of Heidegger's Nazism. The aim of this paper is to describe the little-known French discussion of Heidegger's Nazism in some detail,<sup>2</sup> and then to draw some conclusions concerning the reception of Heidegger's theory. In view of the scope of the French discussion, the main stress will be placed on an understanding of the main lines of

the controversy as distinguished from an encyclopedic presentation of all the material.<sup>3</sup>

## 1 The French reception of Heidegger's Nazism

The reception of Heidegger's Nazism, although not always under that name, has been underway for several decades, at least since the 1930s.<sup>4</sup> The first philosophical debate between representatives of different views of Heidegger's Nazism only began about a decade and a half later, in the second half of the 1940s in the pages of the French intellectual journal, *Les Temps modernes*.<sup>5</sup> Until recently the reception of Heidegger's Nazism developed in a largely desultory fashion, attracting little attention, with occasional bursts of activity. Significantly, as late as the mid-1970s, in a detailed study of Heidegger's political thought, an observer could state that only three books required mention.<sup>6</sup> Although the reception of Heidegger's Nazism was never as tranquil as ordinary scholarly debate, it was burst asunder, literally transformed, by two publications in the late 1980s: Farias' resolute effort under difficult conditions finally to study Heidegger's Nazism in a wider historical context,<sup>7</sup> and Ott's historically more careful but even more damning effort towards a Heidegger biography.<sup>8</sup> Farias' book served as a catalyst for a strident debate virtually across Western Europe, which now gives signs of spreading, in more scholarly, less virulent form, to the United States.<sup>9</sup> It is a measure of the subversive character of Farias' assault on the Heideggerian establishment that although he lives and teaches in Germany, he was only finally able to publish his book in France.

In order to understand the particular, indeed peculiar, nature of the French reception of Heidegger, it is helpful to provide a brief characterization of the French intellectual context, above all French philosophy. Philosophy in general is not given to rapid changes, since it often takes centuries for problems to be formulated, for ideas to attain wide appeal, for shifts in emphasis to occur. Just the opposite is the case in French thought as viewed on a certain level. In the last two decades, an exceedingly short period by philosophical standards, French philosophy has considered and later discarded options proposed by structuralism, post-structuralism, the *nouveaux philosophes*, hermeneutics, existentialism, semiology, post-modernism, etc. There is obviously no guarantee that the latest mode on the scene, deconstruction, which is better known and more influential in the United States than in France, will survive, or survive more than the proverbial fifteen minutes during which each of us will supposedly be famous.<sup>10</sup>

The rapid pace in which the various aspects of French thought come into being and pass away suggests that French philosophy – which gave

rise to the post-modernist theory according to which there is no ground, no overarching single tale which locates all its variants – is itself post-modernist.<sup>11</sup> One could easily infer from what by philosophical standards seems to be the nearly instantaneous rise and fall of competing points of view that, to parody Yeats, things have indeed fallen apart since the centre does not hold, in fact fails even to exist.<sup>12</sup> But these appearances are indeed deceiving since to a perhaps unsuspected extent there is an intellectual centre in French intellectual life, which underlies and makes possible the profusion and confusion of swirling ideas as only its various manifestations.

Although French thought may seem to be the philosophical analogue of the Maoist injunction to let a hundred flowers bloom, from a historical point of view it has long been dependent on a single main component. After the French Revolution, which in principle guaranteed fundamental rights, including religious rights, to all, France remained, and still remains, a mainly Roman Catholic country;<sup>13</sup> to a scarcely lesser extent French thought has been dominated over several hundred years by forms of Cartesianism.<sup>14</sup> It is hard to imagine and difficult to describe the extent of Descartes' influence on French intellectual life, which descends even to the level of a correctly-written paper, the so-called *dissertation*, in the *lycée*. It is not without reason that Sartre has been called the last of the Cartesians and Merleau-Ponty, his younger colleague, has been hailed as the first non-Cartesian French philosopher. For in France over the course of several hundred years, Descartes has played the role of the master philosopher, *le maître penseur*, whose thought furnished the central organizing principle of all intellectual life.

In the period since the 1930s the two main philosophical developments in French thought, namely the attention to Hegel and then to Heidegger, can both be explained in respect to the dominant Cartesianism. The introduction of Hegel in France has been aptly, although not entirely accurately, traced to the influence of Alexandre Kojève's famous seminar on the *Phenomenology* during the late 1930s.<sup>15</sup> Although a brilliant thinker in his own right, a major star in the philosophical firmament, and indeed critical of Descartes, Hegel is also in numerous ways a neo-Cartesian, who perpetuates the well-known Cartesian concerns with certainty, truth in the traditional philosophical sense, metaphysics, first philosophy, etc.<sup>16</sup> The importance of Hegel's influence on French thought in this century should not hide the extent to which, in reacting against Hegel as the *maître du jeu*, the master of the game, later French thinkers were reacting through Hegel to the continued influence of Descartes.<sup>17</sup> This reaction is in part prolonged in the more recent turn to Heidegger, a notorious anti-Cartesian.

Roughly since 1945, and increasingly in recent years, French thought has been dominated by Heidegger.<sup>18</sup> To understand the turn to Heidegger

in French philosophy, two factors are important. First, there is Heidegger's well-known anti-Cartesianism, which conveniently meshes with the continued reaction against the father of French philosophy, in a form of conceptual parricide stretching over more than three centuries. Heidegger's thought is inseparable from its anti-Cartesian bias which only grows deeper in his later turn away from *Dasein* in part in order to expunge any residual Cartesianism.<sup>19</sup> Heidegger's attempt to dismantle modern metaphysics resembles French philosophy itself. The introduction of his thought within the French context as part of the reaction against Hegel, or rather the French form of Marxist Hegelianism, only showed the persistence of the difficult effort to throw off the Cartesian background.

Second, there is the more immediate anti-humanist reaction to the prevailing left-wing Marxist, humanist form of French Marxism, associated with such writers as Kojève in the first place, as well as at various times Camus, Nizan, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Garaudy, Foucault, perhaps Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, etc., which bothered, in fact offended, those concerned to maintain the traditional French value-system. Heidegger's self-proclaimed anti-humanism, in fact an effort to found a new humanism surpassing the old variety, provided a convenient way to throw off the yoke of Hegel's influence, which to many seemed merely a stand-in for Marxism, including its political dimension.

Jean Beaufret later played a leading role, but at least initially Jean-Paul Sartre was mainly responsible for creating the French fascination with Heidegger. Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, which was doubly dependent on both Hegel and Heidegger, focused attention on both thinkers during the Second World War, reinforcing the interest in Hegel and turning attention to Heidegger. Sartre's dual interest in Heidegger and Hegel was seen by many as problematic. The form of Hegelianism current in France, to which Sartre also subscribed, was a left-wing Marxist humanism pioneered by Kojève. Heidegger's own self-described anti-humanism was to begin with perceived as humanism, particularly in the extensive discussion of *Dasein* in *Being and Time*. Heidegger's thought was in part seen as a necessary course correction to what, certainly from a Roman Catholic religious point of view, was perceived as a form of anti-humanism associated with Sartre's atheistic form of existentialism.<sup>20</sup> The point is that although Heidegger left the seminary and later the Church, and his link to Nazism was not an expression of humanism in any ordinary sense, his thought was perceived as a *moindre mal*, a lesser evil, by those appalled by Sartre's own form of existentialist humanism.

What is the extent of Heidegger's influence in French philosophy? There is a measure of truth in Heidegger's famous *boutade* that when the French begin to think they think in German.<sup>21</sup> To an important extent Heidegger's thought now forms the horizon of French philosophy. The dominance of Heidegger in French philosophy can be illustrated by

the startling fact, certainly unprecedented in any other country with a major role in the Western philosophical tradition, that at the present time the three main younger scholars of Aristotle (Rémi Brague), Descartes (Jean-Luc Marion) and Hegel (Dominique Janicaud) in France are all deeply influenced by his thought. French Heideggerianism is a flourishing industry, perhaps the most important contemporary source of studies of Heidegger's thought in the world today. Within France, Heidegger's influence has in the meantime penetrated in other directions as well. It is no exaggeration to say that at present Heidegger and Heidegger alone is the dominant influence, the master thinker of French philosophy, and that his thought is the context in which it takes shape and which limits its extent. It is, then, no wonder that in the recent resurgence of controversy about Heidegger's link to Nazism French philosophy has tended to equate the attack on Heidegger with an attack on French philosophy.

## **2 Origins of the French discussion of Heidegger's politics**

This incomplete account of the source and extent of Heidegger's influence in French philosophy is intended to make possible a closer look at the French discussion of Heidegger's Nazism. This complex discussion, which is still underway, has so far unfolded in three separate moments, or waves. These include a short, initial debate (1946–8) shortly after the end of the Second World War, in which the topic was examined in a cursory manner; a rapid revival of the same debate in the mid-1960s after, indeed partly as a result of, the publication of certain documents calling attention to Heidegger's Nazism; and more recently in the direct, ongoing reaction to the publication in French translation of the Spanish manuscript of Farias' already classical study.

Even before we examine the debate on Heidegger and Nazism in France, we can note in passing three significant features which distinguish it from other portions of a discussion which has by now largely exceeded the limits of a single country or language. First, there is a certain well-known parochialism, long characteristic of French thought of all kinds, which traditionally proceeds as if it formed the entire conceptual universe whose centre and nearly sole focus was Paris. Just as with selected exceptions French thinkers are mainly, even cheerfully, unaware of non-French forms of thought, so the debate on Heidegger's relation to National Socialism has largely occurred without consideration of the discussion underway elsewhere. To be sure, there are occasional references to Hugo Ott, the Freiburg historian, or to Otto Pöggeler, the author of an influential study of Heidegger's thought; but for the most

part, to a degree unusual in the ever-smaller cultural world, the French debate concerns mainly, often only, itself.<sup>22</sup>

Second, in contrast to the widespread French cultural and political xenophobia, we can note that a number of the most important participants in the French debate on Heidegger's relation to National Socialism are either foreign-born French, or not French at all, e.g. Farias, Weil, Löwith, Tertulian, Lukács. This extra-French influence, which has throughout tended to calm and to refocus an often wildly passionate, occasionally irrational debate, was present even at the beginning.

Third, there is a particular philosophical focus due to the contingent fact that until several years ago, when a pirated translation of *Being and Time* was published, only the first half of the book was available in French. Even access to this part of the text was severely restricted by the dependence on a single, strategic Heideggerian essay as the way into fundamental ontology.<sup>23</sup> The French reception of Heidegger has for many years been focused through Heidegger's *Letter on Humanism*. This text is Heidegger's response to a letter addressed to him on 10 November 1946, by Jean Beaufret, the French philosopher, who later became the main figure in the introduction of Heidegger's thought in France, a tireless proselytizer for the Heideggerian point of view. Heidegger replied to Beaufret's letter in December 1946, and then reworked his response for publication.

The resultant text is both philosophical and strategic in character. Although this text is a serious philosophical study, it is also a masterly effort by Heidegger to attract attention to his thought in a neighbouring country at a time when he was seriously beleaguered in his native Germany. As an open letter to a figure on the French philosophical scene at a time when Heidegger was in eclipse because of his association with the Nazi regime, there was an obvious strategic value to the claim that there had been a turning (*Kehre*) in his position, by implication a turning away from his earlier view which was also a turning away from Nazism. Understood in this way, the concept of the turning appears as a tacit, even graceful admission of an earlier complicity, combined with a suggestion of a fresh start, untainted by earlier transgressions, and a suggestion to provide a reasonable alternative to Sartre, a perhaps objectionable French guru. These are all characteristics which quickly raised Heidegger's stock in French intellectual thought and may even have been calculated to do so. Significantly, although at the time Heidegger had already moved far from his original position, his *Letter on Humanism* has been described by a French commentator as the best introduction to *Being and Time*.<sup>24</sup>

In other texts from his later writings, Heidegger continues to insist on the uniqueness of the Germans; but not by accident in the *Letter on Humanism* Heidegger opposes nationalism of any kind as metaphysically



anthropological and subjective.<sup>25</sup> His stated opposition here to biologism, a doctrine to which Heidegger seems never to have subscribed, limits the dimensions of Heidegger's admitted political error.<sup>26</sup> Heidegger's opposition to Sartrean existentialism and humanism of all sorts as metaphysical<sup>27</sup> is balanced by his careful description of his alternative as the only one able to think 'the humanity of man', as an attempt to 'think the essence of man more primordially' in order to restore its original sense, and as a view that 'in no way implies a defence of the inhuman but rather opens other vistas'.<sup>28</sup> Heidegger's depiction of his form of non-metaphysical humanism as more meaningful than its better known alternative is clearly stated: 'To think the truth of Being at the same time means to think the humanity of *homo humanus*. What counts is *humanitas* in the service of the truth of Being, but without humanism in the metaphysical sense.'<sup>29</sup>

The fact that, for contingent reasons, the French reading of Heidegger has largely proceeded from an anti-metaphysical humanist focus explains the relative ease with which Heidegger displaced not only Sartre but Hegel as well in French thought and the violent reaction to the appearance of Farias' book. Beyond his status as an important thinker, Heidegger's implicit claim to be a true humanist smoothed the way for the displacement of views frequently regarded as either anti-humanism or associated with anti-humanism. The shocking revelation that what many had long regarded as essentially humanism in the deepest sense was possibly no more than a false appearance is basic to the French reaction to recent revelations about Heidegger's politics. It is, then, not by chance, that the French discussion of Heidegger's political thought has been so heated since the debate revolves around the essentially political question of whether, as Heidegger and his followers claim, Heidegger's position is a new anti-metaphysical humanism or whether, on the contrary, as others have held, it is a metaphysical form of racism, based on a durable commitment to the superiority of the German people.

In France, the intellectual debate on Heidegger's Nazism began in the pages of *Les Temps modernes*, one of the best known French intellectual journals. This journal was founded by Sartre and his colleagues when France was liberated from the Nazis and later edited by him for many years. The early existentialist Sartre is well known as the author of the view, which to some, including the later Sartre, appeared to ignore the constraints of real life, that we are always and essentially radically free. The initial phase of the debate, which includes texts by Karl Löwith, Alfred de Towarnicki, Eric Weil, Alphonse De Waelhens and Maurice de Gandillac, is preceded by an editorial note. Here, immediately prior to the publication of the famous *Letter on Humanism*, an unnamed editor, in all probability Sartre, draws a comparison between Heidegger and Hegel. Just as the latter's later thought led him to compromise with

Prussia, so Heidegger the man and Heidegger the political actor are one and the same; and his political choice follows from his existential thought. In the same way as an analysis of Hegel's position removes any suspicion with respect to dialectical thought, the writer suggests that a similar analysis will do the same for Heidegger, in fact will demonstrate that an existential view of politics is at the antipodes of Nazism.<sup>30</sup>

### 3 The first wave

With respect to the later debate on Heidegger's Nazism, the initial phase of the French discussion is important in setting out the main criticism, and two of the main defences of Heidegger against criticism based on his Nazi turning. Löwith argues that Heidegger's Nazism follows from his philosophy, a point which recurs in the later discussion, most recently in writings by Janicaud, Zimmerman and Wolin. De Waelhens counters with two of the main defences, due ultimately to Heidegger himself,<sup>31</sup> which have since been belaboured by some of Heidegger's closest students. On the one hand, Heidegger the man and Heidegger the philosopher are unrelated so that Heidegger's political engagement is insignificant with respect to his philosophy, a view later advanced by Fédier and Aubenque in the French discussion, as well as by a host of others outside it. On the other hand, Heidegger's critics are uninformed, so that at the limit only someone who has totally accepted Heidegger's position, in effect a true believer, can possibly criticize it. Beside Fédier, the main current proponent of this idea in the French discussion is Derrida, and in the German discussion, Vietta.<sup>32</sup> At present, the American phase of the discussion is just beginning, but already the idea has been voiced that it is a mistake to understand Heidegger's philosophy in terms of his politics<sup>33</sup> and a reading of the Rectoral address has appeared which 'brackets' the available discussion in order to follow Heidegger's own view of it as a mere defence of the German university.<sup>34</sup>

The initial phase of the French discussion comports no less than three sub-phases, including articles by Karl Löwith, Maurice de Gandillac, and Alfred de Towarnicki, followed some time later by articles by Eric Weil and Alphonse De Waelhens; and ending with responses by Löwith and De Waelhens. Gandillac, who was apparently the first French philosopher to come in contact with Heidegger after the war, went on to an important career as a professor at the Sorbonne. Löwith is a former student, later colleague of Heidegger, who spent the war in exile. He is well known for his own work as well as for an interesting study of Heidegger which attempted to understand why and how Heidegger achieved such philosophical importance.<sup>35</sup> Weil, a Jew who was the assistant of Cassirer, himself a Jew, emigrated early to France where he achieved prominence

as an original thinker, above all for an important analysis of philosophical categories.<sup>36</sup> De Waelhens was a well known Belgian scholar of phenomenology and existentialism, the author of important studies of Heidegger, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, etc. Towarnicki is a journalist who is still active.

Here, as in the later debate, it is instructive to regard the discussion as a series of dialectically interrelated analyses of the same phenomenon from diverse points of view. Both Gandillac and Towarnicki embroider various themes of the 'official' view of Heidegger's Nazism, due finally to Heidegger himself. Gandillac provides a short account of a visit to Heidegger's home which from the present perspective makes two interesting points.<sup>37</sup> On the one hand, he presents with sympathy Heidegger's view that Hitlerism was the historic manifestation of a so-called structural disease of human being as such. It is significant, since Heidegger later insists on the misunderstood essence of Nazism, that in Gandillac's account he refuses to incriminate the fall of the Germanic community whose true sense of liberty he still desires to awaken. On the other hand, several times in the article we are told that Heidegger was seduced like a child by the exterior aspects of Hitlerism, that he was induced to enrol in the Nazi party by his children, etc. Taken together, these two points tend to indicate that Heidegger was unaware of the consequences of, and hence not responsible for, his political actions, while holding open the possibility, which he later never renounced, of the true gathering of the metaphysical *Volk*.

Towarnicki's version of the official view is at least partly false.<sup>38</sup> He suggests that Heidegger was unanimously elected Rector, although that is now known to be untrue. Towarnicki quotes Heidegger to the effect that the death of Röhm opened his eyes to the true nature of Nazism, which he later criticized in his courses on Nietzsche; but we know that Heidegger continued to affirm his belief in an authentic form of National Socialism. The article ends with an affirmation, in the form of a direct quotation, of Heidegger's emotional proclamation of the spiritual importance of France to the world. When we recall that Heidegger also justified his turn to Nazism through the concern with the spiritual welfare of the German people, this remark appears less uplifting.

Löwith's discussion, which was written outside Germany in 1939, hence at the beginning of the war which was to devastate Europe, is still surprisingly complete.<sup>39</sup> It mentions topics which continue to occur and recur in the later debate such as the link between Heidegger's turn towards Nazism and his famous description of resoluteness in paragraph 74 of *Being and Time*, an analysis of the *Rektorsrede*, Heidegger's praise of Schlageter, Heidegger's relation to the students of Freiburg, the role of E. Jünger, etc. Löwith's analysis can be summarized as follows: in the final analysis *Being and Time* represents a theory of historical existence. It was only possible for Heidegger to turn towards

Nazism on this basis since an interpretation of his thought in this sense was possible. Further, Heidegger's turn to National Socialism follows from his prior philosophy, in fact is squarely based on a main principle of his thought: existence reduced to itself reposes only on itself in the face of nothing. Finally, this principle expresses the identification of Heidegger's thought with the radical political situation in which it arose.

Löwith's analysis is a clear attempt to understand Heidegger's Nazism as following from Heidegger's position, and his position as the expression of the historical situation, in Hegelian terms as the times comprehended in thought. Löwith contradicts two points maintained by all subsequent defenders of Heidegger: Löwith denies that Heidegger's philosophy can be understood other than through its social and political context. Accordingly, he contradicts in advance the well-known 'textualist' approach, especially prevalent in French circles, to Heidegger's writings without reference to the wider social, political and historical context in which they arose. He further denies the 'official' view of Heidegger's National Socialism – most prominently represented in the French debate by Fédier and Aubenque, and from a different perspective by Derrida and Lacoue-Labarthe – which tends to minimize, even to excuse, Heidegger's turn towards Nazism as unfortunate, temporary and above all contingent with respect to Heidegger's thought.

At the outset of the French debate, the opposition between Löwith on the one hand and De Gandillac and Towarnicki on the other already symbolizes the two basic alternatives in their respective readings of Heidegger's Nazism as either necessary or contingent. All other later debate, both within and without the French context, only varies, but does not fundamentally modify, these two main options. Obviously, these two extremes are incompatible. Since Löwith traces Heidegger's actions to his thought and Heidegger's thought to the historical context, Löwith disputes Towarnicki, who regards Heidegger's link to National Socialism as temporary, regrettable and unmotivated by the underlying position; and Löwith disputes as well De Gandillac's assertion that Heidegger was unaware of what he did.

The disagreement gave rise to a debate. In the debate Weil, who correctly qualifies Towarnicki's article as a plea for Heidegger, intervenes against the necessitarian thesis, whereas De Waelhens defends the contingency view. Weil criticizes Heidegger for a supposed failure to assume responsibility for his acts and as the sole important philosopher who took up Hitler's cause.<sup>40</sup> But he denies the necessitarian thesis on the grounds that even by Heideggerian standards the link between Heidegger's thought and National Socialism is illegitimate. According to Weil, what he incorrectly calls Heideggerian existentialism is intrinsically defective since it leads to a decision in general, but not to any particular decision. From this perspective, Weil claims that Heidegger has falsified his own

thought in merely pretending *a contrario* that a political decision could be derived from his apolitical thought. Although it is correct to point to the open-ended quality of Heidegger's view of resoluteness, this does not impede the derivation of a political consequence from another aspect of Heidegger's position, such as his conception of authenticity.

This effort to deconstruct the necessitarian reading is peculiar – not because of the amalgam between Heideggerian phenomenology and existentialism, which Heidegger took pains to deny in the *Letter on Humanism*, nor in virtue of the denial that Heidegger is a privileged interpreter of his own thought, since there is no need to accord him this interpretative privilege – because it fails to address the claim that a clear political decision follows from Heidegger's view of authenticity. Now Alphonse De Waelhens – who also identifies Heidegger's thought as an existential phenomenology – suggests, through an attack on the necessitarian thesis, that the theme of Heidegger's fidelity to his own position is less significant than its possibly intrinsic relation to National Socialism.<sup>41</sup>

De Waelhens' attack on the necessitarian thesis is remarkable for two reasons. On the one hand, he raises the issue of who really understands Heidegger as a precondition for the critique of the latter's thought. Later in the discussion, even when the defenders of Heidegger are led to acknowledge that Nazism is central to his position, Derrida and others, including numerous writers outside the French debate, continue to insist that only someone deeply steeped in Heidegger's thought, by inference an unconditional adherent, is possibly competent to measure its defects. On the other hand, De Waelhens formulates a kind of transcendental argument meant to demonstrate that Heidegger's political turning could not have followed from his philosophy. According to De Waelhens, who has obviously been contradicted by history, an analysis of Heidegger's conception of historicity shows that its author could not accept fascism, a doctrine incompatible with the ideas of *Being and Time*. And he disposes of Löwith's version of the necessitarian thesis through a rapid, but unconvincing effort to demonstrate that Heidegger's former colleague did not always possess a sufficient grasp of the master's texts.

When we compare the views of Weil and De Waelhens, we see at once that since both deny that Heidegger's thought bears an intrinsic relation to Nazism, each is obliged to interpret what Heidegger thought and did as an instance of Heidegger's infidelity to Heidegger's own position. De Waelhens is more radical than Weil since he does not assert that Heidegger misunderstood his own thought, but rather claims – a point widely asserted in the later discussion – that the action of the individual Heidegger is without philosophical interest. Perhaps for that reason, he drew a response by Löwith, who does not take up the issue of who is capable of judging Heidegger.<sup>42</sup> This omission is important, since it is always possible to claim that a criticism, any criticism at all,

is based on an insufficient awareness of the position. Rather, Löwith restates his own conviction that Heidegger's relation to Nazism is a necessary consequence of Heidegger's philosophy of existence. He further affirms that it is curious to defend Heidegger against Heidegger's own voluntary political engagement. In his rejoinder<sup>43</sup> De Waelhens insists that his attempt to show that Heidegger's political action did not, and cannot, follow from the latter's philosophy is only a specific instance of the more general claim that one cannot deduce a particular political stance from a philosophy.

De Waelhens' rejoinder invokes a principle, which, if followed, would effectively suppress the possibility of analysing the relation between thought and action. His principle, which contradicts the entire ethical tradition, whose unexpressed premise is that reasons can be causes, is false for at least two reasons: first, throughout history, at present in Eastern Europe, millions of people have been motivated to political action on behalf of ideas. This is a point De Waelhens can accommodate only on pain of denying that such ideas are philosophical. Second, De Waelhens calls on us to abandon the political act of an analysis of the link between Heidegger's philosophy and politics, which precisely assumes the political efficacy of philosophy he is concerned to deny.

#### 4 The second wave

The initial phase of the debate presents a clear opposition between Heidegger's critics, who argue that his Nazism 'necessarily' follows from his thought, and his defenders who maintain that his Nazism is merely a contingent fact. The opposition between necessitarian and contingent readings of Heidegger's Nazism sets the stage for all later discussion of this theme in France and elsewhere. The second phase of the French debate differed in numerous ways from its predecessor. To begin with, it is less compact, and for that reason more difficult to delimit. It occurred over a number of years, roughly from 1948, when the first French edition of Lukács' book appeared, to the publication of Jean-Michel Palmier's study in 1968, the year of the French student uprising. It further includes articles by François Fédier, Jean-Paul Faye, François Bondy, Alfred Grosser, Robert Minder, Aimé Patri, etc., and journals such as *Méditations* and *Critique*. Another difference is the increasingly international character of the second phase of the debate, which makes greater reference to materials published in languages other than French. Further, the discussion now takes on an increasingly heated, often overheated, on occasion even strident, character, which surpasses the generally polite nature of traditional scholarly discussion. One can specu-

late that the excited character of the debate indicates the political stakes of the critique or defence of Heidegger's form of National Socialism.

The remarkable change in tone is arguably due to a variety of factors. On the one hand, in the initial phase of the discussion a number of those who took part, including Löwith and Weil, were not native French, but those who intervene in the next stage of the debate are mainly of French origin. It is a fact that debate in French intellectual circles tends to be noisier and more strident than elsewhere. On the other hand, in the meantime, the full effect of Heidegger's *Letter on Humanism* had begun to be felt. As a result, Heidegger had already begun to acquire a commanding presence in French intellectual life, whose horizon was increasingly constituted by his thought. The greater identification of French thought with Heidegger even as his position displaced Hegel's in the role of the master thinker meant that French scholars on occasion tended to act if they were as much engaged in defending French thought as in defending Heidegger's position. Further, the appearance in the meantime of Guido Schneeberger's collection of relevant documents, as well as other studies, such as those due to Adorno and Huhnerfeld, meant that Heidegger's philosophy, and not only his personal reputation, was now at risk. Finally, France was then approaching a political crisis which would nearly paralyse the country for a number of months beginning in March 1968.

Although in his *Letter* Heidegger implicitly admits his culpability in his stated desire to turn over a new leaf, Beaufret took a more extreme line, which developed only slowly. As early as 1945, when he was close to Marxism, he described Heidegger's adhesion to National Socialism as the result of a naivety linked to a bourgeois character.<sup>44</sup> But Beaufret rapidly abandoned his youthful flirting, common in France at least until 1968, with revolutionary thought. In his letter to Heidegger, he mentions his concern with the relation of ontology to the possibility of an ethics. Beaufret later provided a curious answer to his own concern in two ways: through the denial of a more than casual relation between Heidegger and National Socialism, itself a form of the contingency thesis,<sup>45</sup> but above all in his own later turn to a form of revisionist history in which he simply denied the existence of Nazi concentration camps!<sup>46</sup> Taken to its extremes, the result is to deny that there could be a problem in the link between Heidegger and National Socialism, which, on Beaufret's demonstrably false reading of history, was intrinsically unproblematic. In a word, Nazism was not Nazism! This is surely the most extreme possible form of the deconstruction of the necessitarian thesis, since from this angle of vision it is fully possible to accept that Heidegger was led by his thought to Nazism but to deny that the acceptance of Nazism is problematic.

We can deal separately with the works by Georg Lukács and Jean-

Michel Palmier. Lukács, the important Marxist philosopher and literary critic, is the author of *History and Class Consciousness*, a celebrated book which almost alone created the Hegelian approach to Marxism widely influential in later Marxist discussion.<sup>47</sup> His study of Marxism and existentialism, written during his Stalinist phase, was a consciously polemical intervention in the debate, intended to dismiss existentialism from an orthodox Marxist perspective.<sup>48</sup> Here, he applied Engels' depiction of the relation between thought and being as the watershed question of all philosophy to oppose the possibility of a putative third way, supposedly sought by existentialism, between idealism and materialism. According to Lukács, existentialism is merely a form of subjective idealism linked to the defence of bourgeois class interests. In passing, he specifically attacks Heidegger's position as pre-fascist. He developed this criticism at length in an appendix, 'Anhang; Heidegger Redivivus' – in direct response to the publication of Heidegger's *Letter on Humanism*, the same document which cemented Heidegger's relation to French philosophy – added to the German edition of his book.<sup>49</sup>

Lukács' book seems to have affected the French discussion of Heidegger only marginally, mainly through its influence on Merleau-Ponty and Sartre. Lukács was in part later answered by Merleau-Ponty who, in a famous discussion, identified Lukács as the founder of so-called Western Marxism.<sup>50</sup> And Lukács clearly influenced Sartre's later turn to Marxism. Writing two decades later, Palmier, a careful student of Heidegger, casts himself in the role of a defender of the master against the various attacks which, for perhaps the first time in the French discussion, he attempts to parry through detailed textual analysis. Palmier's study, which appeared at the close of the sharp exchange between Fédier and Faye, is intended by its author as an initial approach to Heidegger's writings from April 1933 to February 1934, that is during his period as Rector.<sup>51</sup> But by casting his net so narrowly, Palmier perhaps unintentionally takes this period, which he recognizes as belonging to Heidegger's *oeuvre*, out of context, since he renders it exceedingly difficult to grasp the degree of continuity between it and the later evolution of Heidegger's thought. Perhaps for this reason, despite the serious nature of Palmier's study, it seems not to have attracted attention in the later debate.<sup>52</sup>

In order to characterize the second phase of the discussion, whose conceptual and chronological limits fall between the books by Lukács and Palmier, we do well to turn to the polemic between Fédier and Faye. Unlike the initial phase of the discussion, which began with a defence of Heidegger, the opening shot was fired by an attacker who was met after a short interval by a committed defender, determined to repulse any assault on the house of Being. This phase of the attack, in fact the second battle of the conceptual war concerning Heidegger, was launched by Jean-Paul Faye in 1961<sup>53</sup> through the publication of the



French translation of certain Heideggerian texts, notably the *Rektoratsrede* and the homage to Schlageter. In a short presentation preceding the texts, Faye notes the violence of Heidegger's revolutionary language, particularly in the Rectoral speech, and its link to Nazi terminology. In a further article<sup>54</sup> in the same journal, Faye reproduces the famous passage on the essence of authentic Nazism from *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, as well as Heidegger's endorsement – in a letter to *Die Zeit* dated 24 September 1953 – of the effort by Christian E. Lewalter to explain away Heidegger's apparent concern with Nazism – published in the same journal on 13 August. Here, Faye develops his earlier discussion by insisting on the relation between Heidegger's views and those of Ernst Krieck. Faye also took the occasion, prodded by Aimé Patri, to correct his earlier translation of Heideggerian texts.

In retrospect, Faye's articles did not break new ground. His main contribution was to make available material which tended to cast doubt on the contingency analysis. The initial intervention by François Fédier, after Beaufret's death Heidegger's most ardent defender in the French philosophical discussion, only occurred some five years after Faye's articles. Even then, Fédier's ire was mainly directed towards other targets. Fédier only turns to Faye when the latter dared to respond to his impassioned defence of Heidegger against all comers. Since that time, Fédier has maintained his visible role – which now after the death of Beaufret, his former teacher, is nearly his alone – as the self-appointed, official spokesman for the contingency thesis, determined to deconstruct any and all forms of the necessitarian analysis. With the exception of Aubenque, at present no other prominent French defender of Heidegger argues that the link between Heidegger's philosophy and politics is merely contingent.

Fédier's initial article<sup>55</sup> was prompted by his perception of attacks on Heidegger by Guido Schneeberger, Theodor Adorno and Paul Hühnerfeld. Instead of a response to a polemic, the author describes his intent as an examination of the presuppositions of so-called hostile arguments. In each case, Fédier shows to his satisfaction that the writer in question is methodologically incapable of comprehending Heidegger's Nazism before describing what he calls reality through a simple statement of the 'main facts' of the case. According to Fédier, who does not examine other, later evidence, with the exception of the *Spiegel* interview, an analysis of Heidegger's courses between 1934 and 1944 suffices to perceive the exact meaning of Heidegger's opposition to Nazism and, for the same reason, to understand why he desired in 1933 to contribute to the realization of something other than what Nazism became.

It is noteworthy that none of the works to which Fédier responds here is due to a French author or published in French. Fédier's discussion, which is a form of the contingency thesis, specifically a further version

of the claim that the critics of Heidegger are insufficiently familiar with the object of their criticism, is only innovative as an early attempt within the French context to respond to foreign criticism of Heidegger. Although Fédier's *défense tous azimuts* did not even consider the nascent French effort to come to grips with the problem, it is not surprising that he was quickly answered by three French writers, including Patri, Minder and Faye, which in turn evoked a rapid rejoinder from Fédier.

Fédier is defended by Patri. In his short paper, he argues in support of Fédier and against Faye that – on linguistic grounds alone – one cannot identify a relation between Heidegger and Nazism, since the adjective 'völkisch' was already used by Fichte who was not an SS.<sup>56</sup> This version of the attack on the necessitarian thesis because the critic is allegedly misinformed was immediately contradicted in another short paper by Minder, who asserts that even a cursory examination of Heidegger's language supposes an acceptance of some fundamental principles of the Third Reich.<sup>57</sup> He further notes, as Farias and especially Ott later argue in detail, that Heidegger was strongly influenced by a certain rustic, but politically reactionary form of Roman Catholicism.

The latter point is a form of the necessitarian thesis interpreted in a historicist manner directly counter to the evolution of Heidegger's thought after the famous turning. For the claim that anyone, including the author of fundamental ontology, is *not* in part a product of the surrounding environment precisely contradicts Heidegger's own claim that we are all determined by the modern world, by technology, ultimately by metaphysics, even by Being. In his response, Faye returns to the attack with a perceptive comment on nascent right-wing Heideggerianism.<sup>58</sup> He notes in an ironic remark that there is at present a Parisian sect devoted to protecting its masters in the way that the RSPCA is devoted to protecting animals! He provides a discussion of the history of the term 'völkisch' and its relation to racism, in particular anti-semitism, later developed by Bourdieu, before turning his critical gaze on the difference, crucial in his eyes, between being in the world and transforming it.

Faye's article could only have been perceived as it was in part intended: as a provocation. In his article, Faye commits a strategic error, since he attempts to show that he has the appropriate knowledge which Fédier accuses him of lacking. The argument cannot be won on such terms, since it is always possible to maintain that the critic knew some things but not others, and the other things are relevant, indeed crucial. In short, it is always possible to claim and in effect to make out the claim that one who opposes a doctrine, any doctrine, is not sufficiently informed. This insight was not lost on Fédier, who quickly responded in this way in order to show that *après tout* Faye was uninformed, in any case not sufficiently informed to criticize such a difficult thinker as

Heidegger, since he did not know German sufficiently well. This is a technique which Fédier has continued to employ with frequency in his now numerous attempts to defend the 'sacred' cause.<sup>59</sup>

In his response, Fédier concedes that Heidegger did use certain incriminating expressions over a ten-month period, but he denies that as a result Heidegger's thought is compromised in any way. In the course of a veritable demonstration of why no translation is safe from 'deconstruction', which anticipates Derrida's use of this method in his best days, Fédier goes so far as to say that a 'real' translation (sic!) of the Rectoral address will remove the vestiges of Nazism which Faye has 'injected' into it. He further advances a claim – which he later developed at length in a book – that although Heidegger was mistaken in 1933 in his allegiance to Hitler at the time it was impossible to understand what Hitler would become. He closes with a triple criticism of Heidegger's failure: to foresee the consequences of Nazism, to measure the powerlessness of thought with respect to Nazism and to grasp that thought could not modify what was underway. The latter two points are different versions of the same idea of the weakness of thought, which represent an application of Heidegger's own later view, in the *Letter on Humanism* and elsewhere, of thought as different from and opposed to philosophy.

For present purposes, Fédier's argument is interesting as the basic statement of the contingentist attack on the necessitarian analysis. More than twenty years later, one can no longer in good faith doubt the existence of a form of right-wing Heideggerianism determined to save Heidegger at all costs, even if to do so on occasion requires one to deny the apparently evident. At this early stage, with the exception of Beaufret, Gandillac and De Waelhens, and to a lesser extent such secondary figures as Patri, Fédier was virtually isolated as the keeper of the grail of Being. But as early as his first skirmish, he identified the basic form of his response to any form of the necessitarian argument.

Fédier's strategy is obviously dependent on that of such pioneer defenders of Heidegger in the French-language discussion as De Waelhens, who formulated the initial version of the attack on the necessitarian thesis for insufficient evidence. Now De Waelhens' version of this gambit was unconvincing since it was no more than the claim, which can always be made, that the critic is uninformed. Yet this claim was unconvincing, or at least not convincing, certainly not sufficiently convincing to be acceptable with respect to such a truly knowledgeable observer as Löwith. Yet if he does not perfect this strategy, Fédier at least takes it much further by developing it into a coherent defence, much as in chess the difference between an isolated move and a viable defence consists in the articulation of the various elements. Fédier's counter consists in the following elements, all calculated to make it difficult, even impossible to make out a claim for a durable, or even a transitory, link

between Heidegger and Nazism: the assertion that Heidegger was naive, but not culpable since he did not, or could not, know the nature of Nazism; the intimation that the critic is inadequately informed, for instance about Heidegger, as concerns the German language, etc.; and the pretension that a simple statement of the 'facts', including a look at the statements of others who were there and hence by implication know the 'real' story is sufficient to separate the 'real' Heidegger from the mythic figure who is the target of his critics. Combined in different ways, all of these elements later return in the third phase of the French debate on Heidegger and National Socialism.

### 5 The onset of the third wave

The third, most recent phase of the French debate began when Farias' study burst onto the intellectual scene in the fall of 1987. Any account of this phase needs to distinguish between the immediate reaction to Farias' book in French circles and the more measured, but often still heated discussion which followed and at the present time is still underway. The immediate French reaction to Farias' book was part of a rapid response which, it is fair to say, swept over Western Europe. The major newspapers and many magazines in all the major European countries carried articles concerning this study, often with a kind of concealed amusement directed at the French reception of the work.

Two examples from the West German press and one from an Italian newspaper are typical. In an article in a well-known liberal German daily, the author, apparently unaware of the preceding discussion, comments that the question of the negative influence on Heidegger's thought will henceforth be raised in France as well as in Germany.<sup>60</sup> In a respected intellectual German weekly, another writer concludes that Heidegger's letter to Jean Beaufret did not remain without a response, since it led to French post-modernism, although none of the post-modernists, who are all staunchly anti-totalitarian, can be simply assimilated to Heidegger in a political manner.<sup>61</sup> Both of these articles are cautious and, in the best German sense, *sachlich*, concerned more to report than to pass judgment.

We find a much sharper, less journalistic reaction in an Italian daily newspaper which counterposes articles by two well-known Italian philosophers: Roberto Maggiori, an anti-Heideggerian; and Gianna Vattimo, a well-known Heideggerian. Responding to an earlier review by Vattimo of the Farias book, Maggiori criticizes Vattimo's view that the whole 'affaire Heidegger' is an operation directed against certain Parisian thinkers. In a sharp response, which recalls Beaufret's estimate of Heidegger as a conceptual giant among pygmies, Vattimo dismisses Farias' work as of little historical consequence.<sup>62</sup>

The sharp exchange between Maggiori and Vattimo is similar in content, but not in tone, to the often much sharper character of the French discussion. The immediate reaction, what in French is aptly called the *réaction à chaud* was precisely that, namely heated, in fact overheated to a degree unusual even in French intellectual circles. This phase of the controversy, which was more symptomatic of the depth of feeling than insight into the problem, was uncharacteristically played out in the pages of the daily papers, the weekly magazines, in art and literary journals, on television, etc., in short through forms of communication not often associated with the measured tread of philosophical debate. It involved such well-known figures on the French intellectual scene as Derrida, Finkielkraut, E. de Fontenay, Baudrillard, Lévinas, Aubenque, Blanchot, Bourdieu, Renaut, Ferry, Daix, etc., as well as a large number of less well-known figures, all of whom felt called upon to comment on the situation; it involved as well foreign scholars imported for the occasion such as Gadamer. What had earlier been a philosophical debate, a disagreement between scholars on a theme concerning a well-known, but obscure German thinker, quickly became a kind of intellectual free-for-all in which opinions, even frank accusations, were voiced in rapid fashion. The result was to guarantee a *succès de scandale* for a book which rapidly became a *cause célèbre*.

One way to indicate the amplitude of the immediate reaction, which lasted for weeks in certain cases, is by a simple list, in no particular order, of some of the newspapers and journals which ran articles, sometimes numerous articles, on the topic: *Art Press*, *La Quinzaine Littéraire*, *Le Monde*, *Le Matin*, *Libération*, *La Croix*, *Le Quotidien de Paris*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Magazine Littéraire*, *Le Canard Enchaîné*, etc. The tone of the debate to follow was given by the opening shot, fired by Christian Jambet, a former *nouveau philosophe*, in his preface to the French edition of Farias' work. His sharply-worded preface begins with a reference to the traditional belief in the virtue of philosophy for life, before building to remarks on the manner in which Heidegger allegedly identifies authentic existence with a mere semblance, itself representative of the politics of extermination. Jambet ends with a statement intended to sum up Heidegger's thought in a reference to a well-known film, *Night and Fog* (*Nuit et brouillard*) on the Nazi concentration camps:

Heidegger has the merit of making ontology the question of our time. But how can we accept that philosophy, born of Socrates' trial for leading a just life, ends in the twilight where Heidegger wanted to see the end of the gods, but which was only the time of Night and Fog?<sup>63</sup>

In his preface, Jambet raises the question of the specific difference which opposes, or seems to oppose, Heidegger to the entire philosophical

tradition through the relation between his own thought and absolute evil. Yet Jambet does not raise the other theme, highly relevant in the French context, of the specific link between Heidegger's philosophy and French thought. Certainly, the latter topic is partially responsible for the inflamed, passionate character of the immediate French reaction. Perhaps Hugo Ott, the Freiburg historian, caught the mood best in the opening comment of his review of Farias' book: 'In France a sky has fallen in – the sky of the philosophers.'<sup>64</sup>

Even a small selection will communicate the sheer breadth of opinion in the immediate response to Farias' study in French circles. In a sober article, Roger-Pol Droit states that as a result of his study Farias has dismantled the 'official' view of Heidegger's merely contingent relation with National Socialism, long maintained by Beaufret and other friends.<sup>65</sup> According to Droit, who clearly denies De Waelhen's claim, in the future it will be impossible to separate Heidegger the philosopher from Heidegger the man, and it will be necessary to think the link which unites them. Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt, a French refugee from German Nazism, welcomes Farias' study for swelling the meagre ranks of those bothered by Heidegger's Nazi past; he regards Farias' book as a means to impede the normal business of the Parisian Heideggerians, henceforth obliged to confront the issues.<sup>66</sup> In a response, Emmanuel Martineau, the author of the pirated translation of *Being and Time*, a friend and student of Beaufret, admits that the latter became part of Heideggerian fascism, which he regards as matched by an hysterical anti-Heideggerian fascism. He accuses Goldschmidt of falling prey, not to the hate of Nazi cruelty, but purely and simply to the hatred of thought.<sup>67</sup>

Alain Finkielkraut complains that in noting the connection between *Being and Time* and *Mein Kampf*, there is a concealed risk of promoting a kind of fascist reaction against philosophy.<sup>68</sup> In a response to Finkielkraut, Goldschmidt suggests that in France there is little real knowledge of Nazism; there is further an incapacity to see that a kind of Nazism rooted in German thought since Fichte is central to Heidegger's thought.<sup>69</sup> Jean Baudrillard observes that the so-called necrological discussion concerning Heidegger has no intrinsic philosophical meaning. He maintains that this discussion only betrays a transition from the stage of history to the stage of myth in which events, which we cannot grasp on the plane of reality, give rise to a convulsion indicative of a loss of reality.<sup>70</sup>

Martineau's version of the lack of critical competence, already in evidence in earlier discussions, is further developed by Jacques Derrida in an interview.<sup>71</sup> According to Derrida, then on the point of publishing a book coincidentally concerned with Heidegger and politics, the so-called facts discovered by Farias are not new for anyone seriously interested in Heidegger; and the interpretation of their relation to the master's thought

is so insufficient as to raise the question of whether Farias has devoted more than an hour to reading Heidegger. Yet Derrida also concedes the need to show the deep link between Heidegger's thought and actions to the possibility and reality of what he calls all the Nazisms.

In the face of Derrida's claim that Farias is not a competent reader of Heidegger's texts, Farias' enumeration, in his response, of a list of facts, supposedly brought to the attention of scholars for the first time, seems vaguely unsatisfactory.<sup>72</sup> A still more radical response is furnished by Pierre Aubenque, the well-known Aristotle scholar, who, in a bitter article<sup>73</sup> simply denies all the relevant points, including the relevance of Farias' book, the intellectual honesty of his analysis, the need for a study of this kind and the lack of a significant connection between Heidegger's thought and Nazism. Aubenque's analysis is supported by Pascal David, who ends a review of Farias' study with a quotation from Abraham a Santa Clara – the Augustinian anti-Semite whom Farias regards as influential on Heidegger – to the effect that God loves fools, not foolishness.<sup>74</sup>

In his article, Aubenque refers approvingly to Derrida, but the difference between their respective readings of Heidegger's Nazism places them in different camps. Although infinitely more clever than Fédier in his avowal of a version of the contingency thesis, Aubenque is finally close to Fédier's wholly unyielding defence, which simply denies that there is a problem worthy of consideration. In comparison, Derrida's response is more innovative in 'deconstructing' the opposition between representatives of the necessitarian and contingentist analyses. In essence, Derrida proposes that we can acknowledge the intrinsic link between Heidegger and Nazism, although he continues to insist that only the anointed few can comprehend it in the correct manner.

The result is to concede the main point of the necessitarian approach, but to restrict its development by continuing to insist, as the contingentists have all along, that only the 'orthodox', or more precisely the 'orthodox' critic of Heidegger, can measure the problem. An appropriate analogy is the claim made by a former Stalinist that only Stalin's victims can legitimately judge his crimes. This new standard of criticism, which couples an admission of the problem – which can no longer be denied, and is in fact no longer denied in any straightforward fashion by any observer with the clear exception of Fédier and Aubenque, who continue to represent the original form of the contingentist view – with the insistence on expert knowledge of Heidegger's thought as a precondition for valid discussion of Heidegger's Nazism, represents a significant evolution in the scholarly French discussion of this theme. As a result, the gap between the discussants has narrowed considerably since the point at issue is no longer whether there was a real and durable link between Heidegger and Nazism – something perhaps only Aubenque among the more significant French intellectuals still denies – but rather how to

understand this link, in particular how to understand its significance for his philosophy.

In philosophy, because of the length of the gestation period, the debate normally unfolds rather slowly, over a period measured at best in years and more often in decades or centuries. Now in French circles, where the half-life of a theory is very short, the debate usually unfolds more quickly, since to publish slowly would be to run the risk of being able to comment on a topic only as it was in the process of disappearing from the intellectual scene. Until recently, that is until the publication of Farias' work, with the exception of Palmier's study, no books wholly, or even mainly, centred on the theme of Heidegger and Nazism had appeared. This lacuna, if it is one, was now rapidly corrected, at a speed extraordinary even by the standards of the French intellectual discussion. Farias' book was published in October 1987. From that period until the following May, even as a steady, but steadily diminishing, stream of articles devoted to the topic continued to pour out, in an extraordinary burst of scholarly creativity no less than six studies devoted to this theme appeared.<sup>75</sup> Not surprisingly, in most cases they reflected the new consensus that there was a problem, although they differed widely on its description and analysis.

## 6 The third wave

Let us discuss these books in the order in which they appeared, which corresponds at least roughly to the order of their composition. We can begin with three rather different studies by Pierre Bourdieu, by Jean-François Lyotard, one of the main representatives of the post-modern tendency in French philosophy, and by Fédier. Bourdieu's discussion of what he, following Heidegger's concern with Being, calls Heidegger's political ontology, is the second edition of a text originally published in 1975, rewritten and adapted to recent revelations about Heidegger. Lyotard's study is the apparent result of the desire, or at least felt need, of every well-known Parisian intellectual, who desires to avoid regression to the state of mere anonymity, to comment rapidly on any major topic. Fédier's work is a further example of his continued effort, which in the meantime has lost any semblance of scholarly credibility, to maintain the contingentist thesis in its original, but now outmoded form. These three disparate works nicely illustrate the range of the next strand in the scholarly discussion by those whose relation to Heidegger is either tangential or, if the relation is on the contrary close, at least tangential to the further evolution of the Heidegger debate.

In a short introduction to his short study, Bourdieu, a well-known Marxist sociologist, indicates that his analysis of methodology has been



updated in the footnotes and by placing at the end three chapters concerning the analysis of Heideggerian language.<sup>76</sup> In an evident reference to the first edition of his book, he remarks – with a certain self-approval – that, despite the image of sociology, a close reading of Heidegger's work already revealed such themes as: anti-Semitism, his refusal to break with Nazism, his ultra-revolutionary conservative tendencies, as well as his disappointment in the lack of recognition of his revolutionary aspirations as the philosophical *Führer*.<sup>77</sup> In a clear allusion to the prior debate on Heidegger and politics, Bourdieu states that the failure to understand what has occurred was aided by Heidegger's erection of a wall between anthropology and ontology,<sup>78</sup> although we need now to examine the intrinsic blindness of these 'professionals of lucidity'.<sup>79</sup>

Bourdieu is prescient in his allusion to Heidegger's anti-Semitism which has only recently been established.<sup>80</sup> His comments are significant in raising the second-order question of how so-called professionals of lucidity are able to respond to a situation of this kind. He provides an answer as to how one ought to proceed in a manner which reveals the politically conservative thrust of purely textual analysis, favoured most prominently in the current French discussion by Derrida and other so-called deconstructionists. According to Bourdieu, even the most determined adversaries of Heidegger have missed some of the signs concerning his Nazism since they unfortunately accept the form of immanent textual hermeneutics on which others, that is, Heidegger's epigones, insist. An approach of this kind, even its most radical form, can at best be partially successful since it concerns certain presuppositions only.<sup>81</sup> In fact, this sort of approach is dangerous since when rigorously applied it has the effect not only of sanitizing what is unsavoury but of turning attention away from the political dimension to which the texts in question, even by their failure to state their aim, none the less refer. A striking example provided by Bourdieu concerns the manner in which a variety of participants in the French discussion, e.g., Beaufret, Lefebvre, Châtelet and Axelos – in fact those who accept Heidegger's own effort in the *Letter on Humanism* to measure his thought in terms of Marx's – see a convergence between Heidegger and Marx.<sup>82</sup>

Bourdieu insists that we must abandon the separation between a political and a philosophical interpretation in order to institute a double reading (*lecture double*) which is both political and philosophical for Heideggerian texts characterized by an intrinsic ambiguity.<sup>83</sup> His aim is to break out of the circle formed by an exclusively immanent reading of the text, doubly confined within the text and to professionals, such as professional philosophers, or even confined to those philosophers who profess allegiance to Heidegger.<sup>84</sup> He regards Heidegger as representative of extremely conservative revolutionary tendencies which arose in Germany between the two World Wars. And he agrees in part with the

tendency of French defenders of Heidegger to discern two basically different stages in his thought. According to Bourdieu, Heidegger II constitutes a series of commentaries on Heidegger I in which, as the master himself notes, nothing is abandoned but, in Bourdieu's words, the celebrated author now absolutizes his practical choices in philosophical language.<sup>85</sup> He regards Heidegger's denial of a relation between his and any other position as an exercise in negative political ontology.<sup>86</sup> In Bourdieu's view, only those sensitive to the situation beyond the internal approach to the reading of the text can finally decode it.<sup>87</sup>

Bourdieu is in part correct that Heidegger refused to explain his relation to Nazism since to do so would have been to admit that the essential thought never thought the essential, since Heidegger did not and could not grasp Nazism on the basis of his thought of Being. Bourdieu's error, which reveals a problem in his methodology, is to trivialize Heidegger's position by reducing it merely to an unconscious component which it supposedly later erects as a philosophical standard. Yet when we consider Heidegger's texts, not only in the context of his thought, but his thought in the context of the social and political context, we clearly have access to a dimension not accessible if we limit ourselves to a more immanent textual approach. Bourdieu's point tends to undermine various forms of immanent hermeneutics, including the celebrated view of intertextuality. It further reveals a conscious or unconscious strategy on the part of some right-wing Heideggerians, the reason for its relative success, and the way in which, as Bourdieu's own essay demonstrates, one can surpass its limits.

Bourdieu's book is a significant effort, altogether too rare in the discussion, to come to grips with the political dimension of Heidegger's thought against the historical background. The limitation of his account is that he mainly relies on an essay already in hand with only minor changes to react to more recent discussion. Although both Lyotard and Fédier make greater efforts to confront the latest research, their books are less impressive. Like Bourdieu, Lyotard also refuses to amalgamate Heidegger's thought and his politics.<sup>88</sup> Yet in comparison with Bourdieu's book and his own earlier writing, Lyotard's essay appears hasty and unsatisfactory. Bourdieu's work is saturated with references to English and German discussion, and is particularly rich in allusions to the constitution of the Weimar ethos against the nineteenth-century German background. Bourdieu's analysis of the relation between Heidegger's thought and the historical, cultural and political background, are still unsurpassed in the French discussion. With the exception of the obligatory tipping of the hat to Freud and Kant, Lyotard is exclusively concerned with French sources, something unsurprising since he holds that the 'problem' is essentially French.

Despite Habermas' effort<sup>89</sup> to portray him and his colleagues as crypto-

conservatives, Lyotard's approach reveals a fashionable, post-modernist form of liberalism. The term 'Jews' (*les 'juifs'*) in the title refers not only to the Jews, but to all those who in Europe have always been assimilated to them. This slight volume is divided into two chapters, respectively titled 'The "Jews"' and 'Heidegger'. According to Lyotard, who seems to like quotation marks, what he refers to as the Heidegger problem is a 'French' problem.<sup>90</sup> He holds that 'the Jews', those 'outcasts' of society, demonstrate that man's misery is constitutive of his being.<sup>91</sup> Lyotard insists on the need to think the Heidegger problem<sup>92</sup> without accepting the modish view that Nazism can either be deduced from *Being and Time* or that this book arose from an ethos which was already Nazi or pre-Nazi.<sup>93</sup> After stating that both Farias and Derrida are correct, Lyotard asserts that there is, however, something unforgettable but still forgotten, and which constitutes the real problem, that is that Heidegger could possibly have thought that in and through his collaboration with the Nazi party a real opportunity existed.<sup>94</sup>

Lyotard is close to Bourdieu with respect to the famous turning, which he describes in difficult language as 'the amnesiac meditation of what will occur in Heideggerian "politics"'.<sup>95</sup> He suggests that *Being and Time* makes possible, but does not require, Heidegger's political engagement,<sup>96</sup> as witness the political reading Heidegger gave of his own thought during the Rectoral episode.<sup>97</sup> The remainder of the book consists in a serial critique of the views of other French commentators, including Derrida, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy. For Lyotard, all of them fail to grasp that – as Lyotard notes in a comment on Heidegger's 'Essence of truth' – in Heidegger's turn towards Being and by inference away from the Jews, or 'Jews', Heidegger's thought commits a cardinal 'fault' since it is still the hostage of the Law (*la Loi*).<sup>98</sup>

This discussion is perhaps most enlightening as an undeveloped, but correct suggestion: although not an overtly political book, *Being and Time* could be and in fact was read by Heidegger in a political sense as the basis of his turn towards Nazism.<sup>99</sup> The suggestion that the basic flaw in Heidegger's thought resides in its relation to the Law, perhaps by extension in its dependency on the non-differentiated other, or other than itself, calls attention to a possible relation to the German Idealist tradition; but it is unfortunately too vague to state clearly, much less to evaluate. This is not the defect of Fédier's work, which could hardly be clearer in its intent or weaker in its arguments.

Fédier's book<sup>100</sup> is the latest, hopefully final expression of his unremitting faith as an orthodox Heideggerian unswayed, or even chastened, by new information or the intervening debate. He displays this point of view in his study with increased ardour even as he becomes the most prominent and certainly most persistent representative of this angle of vision, a sort of living dinosaur. Like the mythical author in Camus' *La*

*Peste*, the entire bibliography of certain writers is wholly composed of multiple versions of a single text, which they write again and again in different forms. Fédier's scenario follows in detail the meanders of his initial defence of the master in articles published more than two decades ago. The relevant difference is that here the *rappel des faits*, meant to exonerate Heidegger, is not due to Fédier and does not follow, but precedes the discussion. In a 'bibliographical essay' ('essai bibliographique') which begins the work, and which opens and closes with comments on the tranquil little city of Messkirch where Heidegger was born and is buried, François Vezin declares that the period of the Rectorate is no more than a parenthesis in Heidegger's life.<sup>101</sup>

Like the earliest forms of the contingentist analysis, Fédier's book is intended to defend Heidegger by attacking his detractors, in particular Farias. In the course of a difficult defence, the author is compelled to take extreme measures. Two examples worth noting are the tortured distinction introduced between anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism,<sup>102</sup> and the defence of the German bishops for their 1933 decision to remove the interdiction which prevented Roman Catholics from adhering to National Socialism. In his Introduction, Fédier indicates that his book is meant as an apology in a supposed Socratic sense in order to dispose of the charges.<sup>103</sup> Like a good defence lawyer, he begins by exaggerating the 'crime' in order to show that his client could not possibly be guilty of it. According to Fédier, who perhaps had Adorno in mind, Farias holds that Heidegger never said nor thought essentially anything other than Nazism, a charge which Fédier affirms to be a calumny.<sup>104</sup>

This attempted defence is problematic, since neither Farias nor anyone else has ever criticized Heidegger as broadly as Fédier pretends. Although he is concerned to refute all the charges brought against Heidegger, Fédier mainly concentrates on the Rectoral period. He claims that whereas it is permissible to accuse Heidegger of adhesion to Nazism in 1933–4, it is slanderous to describe the adhesion as total, since he never adhered to biological racism, etc.<sup>105</sup> But, then, by this standard there never were many total adherents of Nazism, especially among German academics, since few wholly accepted all aspects of the doctrine. Fédier's main argument consists in a perverse form of scepticism, according to which in 1933 it was not possible to foresee the future of National Socialism.<sup>106</sup> He even asserts that the definitive form of Nazism was not known prior to 1 September 1939.<sup>107</sup> But although many aspects of what would occur were indeed unclear in 1933, and by definition the future is what has not yet happened, the situation was already sufficiently clear then, well before the outbreak of the war, for many, including numerous Jewish philosophers, such as Cassirer, Marcuse, Weil, Benjamin, Löwith, etc., to choose exile. In fact, even Fédier is not convinced by his argument, since he also concedes that when Heidegger took up the cause of

National Socialism it already carried with it the signs of an essential perversity.<sup>108</sup>

The first part of Fédier's discussion, entitled 'Un pseudo-événement', is a long attack on Farias' book because of its allegedly: inquisitorial tone,<sup>109</sup> obfuscation,<sup>110</sup> unconscious appeal to Freudian mechanisms of condensation and displacement,<sup>111</sup> failure to respect the rules of honest scientific procedure,<sup>112</sup> etc. Alone at this late date, when so much is known, indeed when even such *croyants* as Derrida claim incorrectly that everything is known, Fédier explains the existence of Farias' study as a sheer invention (*montage*) of which almost no page resists serious study.<sup>113</sup> In the second part of the discussion, entitled 'Heidegger et la politique', having disposed of Farias to his satisfaction, Fédier provides his own analysis of the problem raised by the Rectoral period, which he attributes to Heidegger's impatience.<sup>114</sup>

In the course of his defence, Fédier makes the following controversial points: the Rectoral address does not show an acceptance of Nazism but only a concern to defend academic science in the university,<sup>115</sup> Heidegger later distinguished himself in his opposition to Nazism,<sup>116</sup> the source of his action lies in a philosophical error leading to a need to modify the position<sup>117</sup> and Heidegger's later silence is to be respected after the martyrdom (sic!) he endured.<sup>118</sup> Yet unfortunately the Rectoral address not only shows an interest in the defence of science, but an explicit concern, which Heidegger underlines here and specifically admits in the article on the Rectorate, to utilize the university to attain a common goal shared with the Nazis: the destiny of the German people; and Heidegger's silence is neither honourable nor acceptable. And examination of Heidegger's texts refutes Heidegger's own claim to have confronted Nazism in his later writings.

Fédier's most interesting point is his claim in passing that a philosophical error necessitates a modification of the position, which suggests, reasoning *modus tollens*, that if a position leads to an incorrect form of action there is something mistaken in its very heart. In different ways this theme is developed in three further books on Heidegger and politics, due to Jacques Derrida, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut. Derrida requires no introduction. Lacoue-Labarthe, Derrida's former student, is a well-known Heidegger specialist, who has worked closely in the past with Jean-Luc Nancy, another of Derrida's close associates.<sup>119</sup> Ferry and Renaut are two young anti-establishment philosophers who have collaborated on several other works. Derrida's book, which coincidentally appeared almost immediately after Farias' study, caused a stir in Heideggerian circles. Lacoue-Labarthe's work is an effort to think through the problem in a manner related to, but also significantly different from, Derrida's analysis, itself apparently dependent on Lacoue-Labarthe's earlier writing. The study by Ferry and

Renaut is an attack on French right-wing Heideggerianism as a form of anti-humanism due ultimately to Heidegger.

Derrida is an important thinker as well as presently the leading Heideggerian in France. His thought is deeply marked by, in fact inconceivable without, the encounter with Heidegger; he has also commented on Heidegger's position in numerous writings.<sup>120</sup> His influential but unorthodox Heideggerianism is itself an important form of Heideggerian 'orthodoxy', especially in France.<sup>121</sup> Derrida's study, which can be viewed as a long meditation on Heidegger, is thoroughly Heideggerian since it proposes to thematize the concept of spirit, something Heidegger never does, in fact avoids. It can be read from at least two perspectives: as a Heideggerian analysis of Heidegger; and as an indirect, but pointed response to the theme of Heidegger and politics.<sup>122</sup>

Derrida's defence of Heidegger, like so much of the French discussion of Heidegger, rests on a creative use of the *Letter on Humanism*. Derrida applies Heidegger's remark that humanism is metaphysical to characterize Heidegger's own Nazism as a metaphysical humanism which, in his later writings, he supposedly overcomes in a non-metaphysical, deeper form of humanism announced in this text. This analysis presupposes on the one hand that the later Heidegger, but not the early Heidegger, is anti-metaphysical, or more precisely beyond metaphysics in any ordinary sense – precisely what Heidegger himself claimed in his later writings, such as the *Beiträge* – and on the other hand that there is a break between the early and later phases of Heidegger's thought.

As a defence of the importance of Heidegger's thought while acknowledging the clear, undeniable link to Nazism, Derrida's strategy is reminiscent of a form of 'orthodox' Marxism, most clearly represented by Althusser and his associates, which argued for a break situated within Marx's thought. On this reading – already foreshadowed in Marx's view of the break between pre-history and human history in the transition from capitalism to communism – Marx's thought allegedly decomposes into two chronologically separable positions, the first of which can be described as philosophy but not yet as science, and the second of which breaks with philosophy in order to assume the form of science which is supposedly beyond philosophy. Althusser, who was obliged by the tardy publication of Marx's early writings to acknowledge the philosophical tenor of the early position, sought to defend the non-philosophical, allegedly scientific character of the later theory, that is, the supposedly mature form taken by Marx's theory after it broke with philosophy. In a similar manner, apparently relying on the concept of the turning in Heidegger's thought, which he does not, however, discuss, Derrida correlates the initial Heideggerian critique of metaphysics with Heidegger's supposedly still metaphysical philosophy, which then later gives way to what Heidegger later describes as an anti-metaphysical view of thinking beyond philo-

sophy. According to Derrida, in his still metaphysical phase Heidegger turned to Nazism, which he renounced in his later move away from metaphysics and beyond philosophy.

Derrida's Heidegger interpretation takes shape as a meditation on the terms *Geist*, *geistig* and *geistlich* in Heidegger's thought.<sup>123</sup> He points out that in *Being and Time* Heidegger warns against the use of *Geist*, which he puts in quotation marks; but twenty-five years later in an essay on Trakl<sup>124</sup> he speaks freely of the same term, which he now employs without quotation marks.<sup>125</sup> Derrida's hypothesis is that for Heidegger this term refers to such supposedly metaphysical concepts as unity (*l'Un*) and gathering (*Versammlung*).<sup>126</sup> According to Derrida, for Heidegger spirit is neither *pneuma* nor *spiritus*, but finally a flame more originary than either the Christian or the Platonic-metaphysical concepts.<sup>127</sup> He maintains that even in 1933, for instance in the Rectoral address, Heidegger rejected the reduction of spirit to reason<sup>128</sup> in order to spiritualize Nazism,<sup>129</sup> as can be seen in the role of spirit in the Rectoral address.<sup>130</sup> It follows, then, that Heidegger's Nazism was metaphysical, and that he overcame it when he overcame the metaphysical element in his own thought.

This attempted defence is problematic for various reasons. To begin with, in his self-described Heideggerian effort to think the unthought Derrida exaggerates the importance of a concept which Heidegger never thematizes precisely because it is not fundamental but ancillary to or even insignificant in his position. Derrida is unconvincing in his claim that spirit is central to Heidegger's thought, in which this concept seems at best a minor concern. Derrida unfortunately trivializes Heidegger's commitment to Nazism as following from a residually metaphysical turn of mind, in effect by reducing a practical political engagement to a philosophical commitment from which it apparently followed but to which it cannot reasonably be equated. A form of thought which makes it possible to accept a particular political approach, no matter of what kind, must not be conflated with its consequence. Obviously, metaphysics as such does not necessarily lead to Nazism, since there are many metaphysicians who did not become Nazis. Yet when Heidegger renounced metaphysics after the turning in his thought, he did not give up Nazism. Further, Derrida is obviously incorrect if he means to suggest that when Heidegger employs the term *Geist* without quotation marks in the 1953 article on Trakl Heidegger has overcome both metaphysics and Nazism. For in the same year he republished *An Introduction to Metaphysics* in which he publicly reaffirmed his commitment to a form of Nazism present, in Heideggerian terminology, under the mode of absence. At most, Heidegger turned away from Nazism as it was, although there is no evidence that he ever accepted it without reservations, but he never turned away from it as he still desired it to be. Finally, the interpretation

of the turning in Heidegger's thought, on which Derrida's defence of Heidegger rests, is basically mistaken if judged by Heidegger's texts. As the *Beiträge zur Philosophie* shows in detail, the turning is intended, not to indicate a break or discontinuity between phases of Heidegger's thought; rather, it is intended to point to further progress from a first beginning to another, deeper beginning more originary than, and a condition of, his initial, but more superficial starting point. Since there is, then, no break in Heidegger's thought, his position cannot fairly be defended in this way.

Lacoue-Labarthe presents a clearer, even more extreme, less acceptable form of a similar argument. Lacoue-Labarthe's consideration of 'la question' antedated Farias' book. In a recent collection<sup>131</sup> he includes two earlier papers concerning Heidegger and politics which preceded and obviously influenced both his and Derrida's later discussions of Heidegger and politics: 'La transcendance finie/dans la politique' from 1981, and 'Poétique et politique' from 1984. In the former, he poses the question of the possibility of a politics which takes into account Heidegger's thought. Here, he examines the Rectoral speech in order to show its link to the destruction of the history of ontology and, by extension, to the effort to rethink the problem of the meaning of Being. In this paper, he makes two points: the Rectoral speech is not an occasional document, but a reflection on science, which is metaphysics as such; and this speech is intended as a philosophical foundation of the political. According to Lacoue-Labarthe, Heidegger's political engagement in 1933 was metaphysical and its basic result is the collapse of Heidegger's fundamental ontology. In the latter paper, in an examination of the question why the poetical dimension arose within political discourse, he argues that Heidegger's effort at the leadership (*Führung*) of National Socialism was essentially spiritual.<sup>132</sup>

There is an obvious, striking continuity between the views of Derrida and Lacoue-Labarthe in their joint insistence on the metaphysical nature of Heidegger's turning towards Nazism and the spiritual component of Heidegger's view of politics. But there is an even more important difference in Lacoue-Labarthe's stress on the link between the political and the philosophical in Heidegger's thought, in virtue of which Heidegger's original philosophical project is compromised by the political action to which it led. The assertion that Heidegger's effort at fundamental ontology was irreparably compromised by his turn to Nazism derives from the recognition – now rarely denied, and explicitly affirmed by Heidegger – that at least his initial enthusiasm for National Socialism followed from his position. This insight is significant for an understanding of the link between Heidegger's thought and Nazism. It leads to a conclusion which Lacoue-Labarthe does not draw, and which Heidegger means to deny in his description of the Rectoral episode as meaningless



(*beudeutungslos*): the later evolution of the Heideggerian position, perhaps even the famous turning in his thought, must be understood, in fact cannot be understood otherwise than in relation to Heidegger's Nazism.

I stress this unstated, but important consequence of Lacoue-Labarthe's article since he mainly develops other themes from his earlier analysis of the relation of poetry and politics, less menacing for the faith of a Heideggerian, in his later treatment of the political as fiction.<sup>133</sup> Unlike some others in the French discussion, who are concerned mainly, or even solely, to defend Heidegger at all costs, and hence unconcerned to present a full record, Lacoue-Labarthe does not hesitate to mention items rarely evoked in the French debate, such as the problem of anti-Semitism, the comments by Löwith and Jaspers, Heidegger's denunciation of Baumgarten, Heidegger's meditation on the nature of the holocaust, etc. It is especially significant, in view of the author's obvious identification with Heidegger as incontestably the best thinker of our time,<sup>134</sup> that he does not hesitate clearly to denounce Heidegger's failure to descry the holocaust which, from Heidegger's conception of history as the unfolding of metaphysics, supposedly constitutes a metaphysical event.<sup>135</sup>

In his book, Lacoue-Labarthe modifies his earlier analysis. According to Lacoue-Labarthe, Heidegger's political engagement in 1933 was based on the idea of the hegemony of the spiritual and the philosophical over the political<sup>136</sup> – a stance in obvious continuity with *Being and Time*<sup>137</sup> and coherent with all his earlier thought<sup>138</sup> – which cannot be explained as an error<sup>139</sup> but must be viewed as a consequence.<sup>140</sup> Now abandoning his earlier insistence on the significance of the Rectoral speech, Lacoue-Labarthe argues for a caesura (*césure*) in the sense of Hölderlin.<sup>141</sup> Heidegger's understanding of the political does not lie in his texts from 1933, including the Rectoral address, but in writings after the break with Nazism, specifically those on technology. In this respect, Lacoue-Labarthe makes two important points: on the one hand, he suggests that there is a beginning of the *Verwindung* of nihilism in the poet's thought,<sup>142</sup> since for Heidegger art opens the possibility of the historicity of Dasein;<sup>143</sup> on the other hand, he maintains that Heidegger's discourse on art throws light on the essence of Nazism as a national-aestheticism.<sup>144</sup>

These suggestions are independent of each other and must be discussed separately. Lacoue-Labarthe is certainly correct that Heidegger never abandoned his concern to seize the destiny of the German people, and that he later linked this possibility to an interest in the alethic qualities of poetry. Yet this point is inconsistent in two ways with his own analysis. For whereas he insists on a break in Heidegger's position, this point requires an acknowledgement of the essential continuity of Heidegger's thought over time as concerns the destiny of the Dasein. And, as a

further, direct consequence, it requires an acknowledgement of a conceptual kinship with Nazism, which Lacoue-Labarthe strongly denies in his critique of Adorno's well-known claim that Heidegger's thought was Nazi to its core.<sup>145</sup> It is further inaccurate to regard Heidegger's discussion of art or technology as illuminating the essence of Nazism. One can concede a certain perverse aestheticism in Nazi ideology, for instance in the writings of Albert Speer, the Nazi architect. But one must resist the idea that the massive political phenomenon of German fascism is solely, or even mainly, or essentially aesthetic.

The usefulness of Lacoue-Labarthe's book is limited by the depth of his own commitment to Heidegger's thought. As a result of his basic acceptance of Heidegger's position, Lacoue-Labarthe is unable to draw the consequences of his own critique of it. For instance, Lacoue-Labarthe cites a passage from an unpublished conference on technology, already cited above, where Heidegger likens agricultural technology to the Nazi gas chambers.<sup>146</sup> Despite his criticism of the patent inadequacy of Heidegger's dreadful comparison, Lacoue-Labarthe, the Heideggerian, is unable to perceive the full implication of Heidegger's statement in at least two ways: in his quasi-Heideggerian claim that this phenomenon somehow reveals the essence of the West,<sup>147</sup> which Heidegger allegedly failed to perceive, which in turn supposes the Heideggerian view that technology is the extension of metaphysics; and in his inability to draw the obvious consequence of his own indictment of Heidegger's failure, due to the inadequacy of fundamental ontology, to grasp the essence of the Nazi phenomenon.

Lacoue-Labarthe's analysis – patient, sober, careful, informed, considerate of other points of view – exhibits virtues unsurpassed in the present French Heidegger debate. This comprehension and tolerance gives way in Ferry and Renault's work to an accusatory, pamphletary, confrontational style, more characteristic of recent French philosophy. In their attack on the separations between various forms of French Heideggerianism as in effect distinctions without a difference – which they paradoxically represent as an effort to surpass mere polemics<sup>148</sup> – they deny the shared assumption, common to Derrida and Lacoue-Labarthe, of a break in Heidegger's thought. Their book is the successor of their earlier work on contemporary anti-humanism, centred mainly on French varieties of Heideggerianism.<sup>149</sup>

Ferry and Renault are most original in their effort to develop Lyotard's suggestion of the link between the defence of Heidegger and French philosophy. They draw attention to the parallel between the French controversy about Marxist anti-humanism in the 1970s and the current Heidegger controversy.<sup>150</sup> Their aim is to diagnose a link between Heidegger's anti-humanism, which they comprehend as the rejection of modernity<sup>151</sup> and the supposed *erreur par excellence* of contemporary French

philosophy.<sup>152</sup> They illustrate this error by Lacoue-Labarthe's strange, even wild comment, in the course of his attempt to differentiate the later Heidegger from the earlier Nazi enthusiast, that 'Nazism is a humanism'.<sup>153</sup>

After some remarks on the significance of Farias' book in the context of the French debate, Ferry and Renault develop their indictment of contemporary French philosophy through the identification of the common thread of various forms of French Heideggerianism. They isolate three variants: the so-called zero degree, represented by Beaufret, which simply denies any relation between Heidegger and Nazism; Heideggerian orthodoxy, which admits, by playing Heidegger II off against Heidegger I, that in 1933 the master was not yet free of the metaphysics of subjectivity; and Derridean, or unorthodox, Heideggerianism, which relies on Heidegger's purported later deconstruction of the concept of spirit. According to Ferry and Renault, in the final analysis there is no difference between Derridean and orthodox Heideggerianism since at best the Derridean approach innovates on a strategical plane only.<sup>154</sup>

Other than through their remarks on Farias' work, the main contribution of Ferry and Renault lies in their survey of various factions of the French debate about Heidegger's politics. They are most helpful in their suggestion of a relation between French post-modernism, or anti-humanism, and Heidegger's own Nazi proclivities. They usefully relate Heidegger's well-known reading of modernity as the reign of technology to his view that democracy and totalitarianism are similar in their domination by subjectivity, and his further adherence to the possibility of a good form of National Socialism<sup>155</sup> as by inference post-modernist and anti-modernist.<sup>156</sup> They criticize Heidegger's general incapacity to think subjectivity<sup>157</sup> because of: an inability to think humanism in a non-metaphysical manner,<sup>158</sup> an inattention to the plural character of modernity,<sup>159</sup> and the inconsistency in his rejection of a humanist vision of man in his view of Dasein in terms of Being. And they invoke a certain humanism in his view of man as transcendental in order to criticize Nazi biologism and racism.<sup>160</sup>

These criticisms are well taken in virtue of Heidegger's identification of humanism with metaphysics. The relation of post-modernism and 'anti-humanism' in the work of recent French thinkers such as Derrida, Lyotard, Foucault and Lévi-Strauss among others is too well known to require detailed commentary. The most original point is insistence on Heidegger's supposed inability to differentiate the various forms of modernity while implying the point, clearly articulated only by Lacoue-Labarthe among Heidegger's French disciples, that Nazism is humanism of a different, supposedly acceptable kind. Beyond its indictment of the French identification with the Heideggerian rejection of Cartesian subjectivity – manifest in the ongoing effort to decentre the subject –

the most important result of this work is to question Heidegger's conception of the subject as transcendence, a theme present throughout his writings from his dissertation on Duns Scotus onwards.<sup>161</sup>

## 7 After the third wave

The French discussion of Heidegger's relation to politics is still underway. Its most recent phase includes a debate between Fédier and Nicolas Tertulian, the well-known Lukács specialist,<sup>162</sup> Janicaud's sober, insightful discussion of the intrinsic link between Heidegger's conception of Being and Heidegger's Nazism,<sup>163</sup> and Meschonnic's remarks on Heidegger's politics in the context of a discussion of Heidegger's language.<sup>164</sup> Tertulian, who is one of the sharpest critics of Heidegger's political engagement, has so far developed his point of view only through a series of polemical articles. Janicaud's contribution is especially important for two reasons. On the one hand, he shows not only insight, but considerable courage, in the context of the highly inbred context of French philosophy, in now taking a more nuanced view of Heidegger's thought.<sup>165</sup> Janicaud's fidelity to the truth above philosophical friendship is as important as it is rare in the discussion of Heidegger's Nazism. On the other hand, Janicaud now clearly insists on the link between Heidegger's thought of Being, what he calls Heidegger's 'historialisme destinal'<sup>166</sup> and Heidegger's Nazism while also underlining the irreducibility of Heidegger's thought merely to Nazism. In the French debate, Janicaud provides the most developed form of the effort, initiated by Löwith more than four decades ago, to comprehend Heidegger's Nazi turning as by no means contingent but as rooted in his philosophical position. This point, which has been urged with increasing frequency recently, and which I believe to be correct, will probably be the eventual verdict of history.<sup>167</sup>

One lesson of this review of the French debate on Heidegger's Nazism concerns the delicate relation between thought and the context in which it arises. We do not know how a philosophical theory takes shape; but we do know that it can neither be reduced to nor separated from the context in which it emerges, including the social, historical and political context on the one hand and the network of competing views against which it strives on the other. Heidegger's position – despite his repeated, but apparently strategical claims, clearly meant to create his own legend, to accept a positive relation of his position to pre-Socratic thought only – needs to be understood against the complex background of theology, German neo-Kantianism, particularly Lask, and Kant's thought, medieval Aristotelianism as well as the social, political and historical situation in Germany between the two World Wars. Heidegger insisted throughout his writings on the crucial difference between philosophy and a mere

*Weltanschauung*, but his own 'philosophy' is in some respects the best counterexample.<sup>168</sup> For his theory of Being is also clearly a *Weltanschauung* which reflects, in fact incorporates, the 'philosophy' of the Weimar Republic.

The French debate offers a particularly interesting example of the delicate relation between thought and its context. With the exceptions noted, it is distinguished by its concern even now to defuse the problematic relation between Heidegger's thought and politics by arguing for a discontinuity between Heidegger's early and later position in order to 'save' his thought and – in so far as the French discussion is dependent on Heidegger's theory – itself. Yet Heidegger only turned against one form of Nazism, not Nazism as such. To fail to see this point, to conflate his withdrawal from the historical form of National Socialism with an unproven rejection of the essence of a movement Heidegger continued to embrace, is to overlook the emperor's new clothes.

Now French philosophers are not less intelligent or well-informed than those elsewhere. How can we explain their reluctance to see that the emperor has no clothes on? I believe that the reason lies in a persistent, unhealthy degree of identification of contemporary French philosophy with Heidegger's position, which literally forms its horizon. We can formulate what is clearly an existential predicament in the form of a paradox: to the extent that the horizon of contemporary French philosophy is constituted by Heidegger's thought, it cannot examine Heidegger's link to Nazism without putting itself into question, that is without simultaneously criticizing the Heideggerian position. In a word, Heidegger's French connection prevents, or impedes, the French thinkers from perceiving that the emperor has no clothes.

The French example is unusual for the extent to which Heidegger's thought dominates French philosophy. The result of this domination is to remain attentive to the unthought in Heidegger's position, at the cost of obstructing any attempt to place the Heideggerian horizon into question. This consequence is useful to the extent that French philosophy remains within the Heideggerian orbit, but also philosophically dangerous. For at least since Plato philosophy has consisted in the refusal to accept undemonstrated assumptions, in the constant effort to clarify, demonstrate or eliminate what it merely presupposed, in order to progress through an examination of its presuppositions.

The recent effort of some dissident French thinkers, especially Bourdieu, Janicaud, Tertulian and from another angle of vision Ferry and Renaut to examine the roots of French Heideggerianism, to reflect on the so-called French problem, is a healthy sign. Despite Heidegger's oft-cited claim that when French philosophers begin to think they think in German – or by implication think about Heidegger, or even within the ambit of Heidegger's thought – it indicates that French thought will be

even more robust, and accordingly able to grow in new and different ways, when it has finally examined its own Heideggerianism. For to the extent that Heidegger still forms the horizon of French philosophy, to appreciate the limits of his thought is to go beyond Heidegger and hence beyond French philosophy. But this move beyond Heidegger is, however, necessary if French thought is to advance beyond its present level.

The French discussion is an extreme example of the problem posed by the reception of Heidegger's Nazism. For a variety of reasons, philosophers in general, not just Heideggerians, have been slow in confronting Heidegger's Nazism. Yet Heidegger's Nazism is deeply rooted in, indeed basic to his philosophy, which cannot be comprehended in isolation from his political turning. At least since De Waelhens, a number of Heideggerians, particularly in France, although elsewhere as well, have insisted that the link between Heidegger's philosophy and politics can be understood only by someone so deeply versed in Heidegger's thought as to be a follower of the master. If we accept this claim, then the result is still another paradox, which can be formulated as follows: only a Heideggerian can grasp Heidegger's thought, including the relation between Heidegger's Nazism and his philosophy; but as our discussion of the French debate illustrates, the link between Heidegger's Nazism and his philosophy can only be grasped from a vantage point located outside of Heidegger's position. It follows, then, on this Heideggerian hypothesis for the understanding of Heidegger's thought, that Heidegger's political engagement is literally beyond criticism: for either it can only be understood by Heideggerians, who cannot confront the problem within the framework of Heidegger's own theory, to which they are committed, or it must be understood by non-Heideggerians who, according to the Heideggerian claim about understanding Heidegger, also cannot understand it. The result, then, of the Heideggerian view of Heidegger is to render this aspect of Heidegger's thought strictly unknowable, a kind of thing in itself, a theory about which anything can be believed but nothing can be known.

The Heideggerian approach to Heidegger suggests that in the final analysis a careful, responsible, but critical reception of the complex issues raised by Heidegger's turning on the basis of his thought to National Socialism is impossible. Yet this inference is unacceptable since we need to understand his Nazism as part of the process of reception of Heidegger's novel position. I am convinced that we can best, and perhaps only, understand Heidegger's theory, including his Nazism, if we are informed about his view but also not committed to it as in principle correct. The discussion has shown that Heidegger's Nazism, and, hence, his thought, cannot finally be comprehended by someone unconditionally committed to the truth of his thought. I conclude that Heidegger's theory, including

his Nazism, like the theories of other thinkers, is finally best understood, by someone committed not to the truth of his position but to the truth.

## Notes

1 For a recent, short discussion of the French reception of Heidegger, see Jürg Altwegg, 'Heidegger in Frankreich – und zurück?', in Jürg Altwegg (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1988), pp. 14–25. See also *Cahier de l'Herne, Martin Heidegger*, edited by Michel Haar (Paris: Cahier de l'Herne, 1983) and *Magazine Littéraire*, 235 (novembre 1986). It is significant that as late as this period, in a special issue containing a 'dossier' specifically devoted to 'Martin Heidegger, l'être et le temps', there was only a brief discussion of the problem of politics. See François Fédier, 'La question politique', pp. 51–2.

2 For an account from a different perspective, see Richard Wolin, 'The French Heidegger debate', in *New German Critique*, 45 (Fall 1988), pp. 135–60.

3 The texts omitted include Georges Friedmann, in *Cahiers de Sociologie*, xvi, 1954, and *Mélanges Lucien Febvre*, 1954; Robert Minder, 'Hegel and Heidegger. Lumières et obscurantisme', in *Utopies et Institutions au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, ed. P. Francastel (Paris-The Hague: Mouton, 1963), and 'Heidegger und Hegel oder die Sprache von Meßkirch', in Robert Minder, *Dichter in der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1966), pp. 210–64; and Alexandre Koyré, 'L'évolution philosophique de Heidegger', in *Critique*, 1 (1946), pp. 73–82, and *Critique*, 2 (1946), pp. 161–83.

4 For a brief introduction, see Richard Wolin, 'Introduction to "Martin Heidegger and politics: a dossier"', *The New German Critique*, 45 (Fall 1988), pp. 91–5. Wolin regards the problem as concerning Heidegger and politics, whereas in fact it more narrowly concerns Heidegger and Nazism.

5 With the exception of a version of Löwith's contribution, this debate is still not available in English. See Karl Löwith, 'Political implications of Heidegger's existentialism', *New German Critique*, 45 (Fall 1988), pp. 117–34.

6 See Karsten Harries, 'Heidegger as a political thinker', *The Review of Metaphysics*, 24 (June 1976), reprinted in Michael Murray (ed.), *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 306–7, n. 10.

7 See Victor Farias, *Heidegger et le nazisme* (Paris: Editions Verdier, 1987).

8 See Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger. Unterwegs zu einer Biographie*.

9 See particularly Michael E. Zimmermann, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, Art* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990) and Richard Wolin, *The Politics of Being: The Political Thought of Martin Heidegger* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

10 Despite the 'violence' of the recent French reception of Heidegger's Nazism, interest in the discussion seems now to have significantly waned. Significantly, the recent publication of a French translation of Ott's book has attracted little attention. For a review in the best academic style, written by Thomas Ferenczi, see 'Douze ans dans la vie de Heidegger. L'historien allemand Hugo Ott confirme que, de 1933 à 1945, le philosophe est resté fidèle au régime hitlérien', *Le Monde*, vendredi 16 novembre 1990, p. 26.

11 For a classic French study of post-modernism, see François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1979).

12 It has been suggested that the rapid pace of change in French thought

indicates that it is in crisis. See Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, Introduction by Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), pp. 3–5.

13 The tenth article of the 'Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen', promulgated by the Assemblée nationale in August 1789, reads: 'Nul ne doit être inquiété pour ses opinions, même religieuses, pourvu que leur manifestation ne trouble pas l'ordre public établi par la loi.'

14 For a recent example, see André Glucksmann, *Descartes, c'est la France* (Paris: Flammarion, 1987).

15 See Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, ed. Allan Bloom, tr. James H. Nichols, Jr. (New York: Basic Books, 1969).

16 For an analysis of Hegel's residual Cartesianism, see Tom Rockmore, *Hegel's Circular Epistemology* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1986), chap. 6, esp. pp. 142–54.

17 In his otherwise excellent study of Hegel as the central thinker in recent French philosophy, Descombes fails to appreciate the sense in which his role in French thought was in part dependent on his relation to Descartes. See Vincent Descombes, *Le même et l'autre. Quarante-cinq ans de philosophie française (1933–1978)* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1979).

18 For a recent analysis of the role of Heidegger in French philosophy, see Alain Badiou, *Manifeste pour la philosophie* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1989), chap. 4: 'Heidegger envisagé comme lieu commun', pp. 27–32.

19 For Heidegger's later criticism of philosophical anthropology as deriving from Descartes, see 'The age of the world picture', in Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, tr. and with an Introduction by William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 115–54.

20 Sartre's basic statement of the humanist thrust of his existentialism is contained in his popular lecture, 'Existentialism is a humanism', tr. Philip Mairet (London: Methuen, 1948). Heidegger's rejection of humanism as a metaphysical concept is developed in his *Letter on Humanism*, in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

21 See 'Only a god can save us: *Der Spiegel*'s interview with Martin Heidegger', *Philosophy Today* (Winter 1976), p. 282.

22 The main exception to this tendency in the French discussion is the work of Bourdieu. See Pierre Bourdieu, *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1988).

23 For a representative sample of how *Being and Time* is received in the French discussion, see 'Dossier: Martin Heidegger', in *Magazine littéraire*, 235 (novembre 1986), pp. 16–58.

24 See Martin Heidegger, *Lettre sur l'humanisme*, translated with an Introduction by Roger Munier (Paris: Aubier, 1964), p. 7.

25 See Martin Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*, p. 221.

26 See Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, p. 231.

27 See Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, p. 202.

28 See Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, pp. 221, 224, 227.

29 Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, p. 231; Heidegger's emphases.

30 See 'Deux documents sur Heidegger', *Les Temps Modernes*, 1(4) (janvier 1946), N.D.L.R., p. 713.

31 For Heidegger's self-serving view that in the Rectoral address he was engaged only in defending the German university, see Martin Heidegger, 'The Rectorate 1933/34: facts and thoughts', in 'The self-assertion of the German university: address, delivered on the solemn assumption of the Rectorate of the



University Freiburg. The Rectorate 1933/34: facts and thoughts', tr. with an introduction by Karsten Harries, *Review of Metaphysics*, 38 (March 1985), pp. 467–502.

32 See Silvio Vietta, *Heideggers Kritik am Nationalsozialismus und an der Technik* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1989).

33 For Sallis' claim that we have to let Heidegger's texts speak to us without any interference due to consideration of his political transgressions, see John Sallis, *Echoes: After Heidegger* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 11.

34 For a reading of the Rectoral address which mainly follows Heidegger's own self-serving view of it, see Charles Scott, *The Question of Ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger*, 'These violent passions: the Rector's address', pp. 148–72.

35 See Karl Löwith, *Heidegger. Denker in dürftiger Zeit: Zur Stellung der Philosophie im 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1984).

36 See Eric Weil, *Logique de la philosophie* (Paris: Vrin, 1950).

37 See Maurice de Gandillac, 'Entretien avec Martin Heidegger', *Les Temps Modernes*, 1(4) (janvier 1946), pp. 713–16.

38 See Alfred de Towarnicki, 'Visite à Martin Heidegger', *Les Temps Modernes*, 1(4) (janvier 1946), pp. 717–24.

39 See Karl Löwith, 'Les implications politiques de la philosophie de l'existence chez Heidegger', *Les Temps Modernes*, 2 (14) (1946), pp. 343–60.

40 See Eric Weil, 'Le cas Heidegger', *Les Temps Modernes* (juillet 1947), pp. 128–38.

41 See Alphonse de Waelhens, 'La philosophie de Heidegger et le nazisme', *Les Temps Modernes*, 3 (1947), pp. 115–27.

42 See Karl Löwith, 'Réponse à M. de Waelhens', *Les Temps Modernes*, 35 (août 1948), pp. 370–3.

43 See Alphonse de Waelhens, 'Réponse à cette réponse', *Les Temps Modernes* (août 1948), pp. 374–7.

44 See Jean Beaufret, *Introduction aux philosophies de l'existence*, série Médiations (Paris: Denoël/Gonthier), p. 30, reprinted as *De l'existentialisme à Heidegger* (Paris: Vrin, 1986), p. 25.

45 See, e.g., his article, 'En chemin avec Heidegger', in Michel Haar (ed.), *Cahiers de L'Herne. Heidegger* (Paris: L'Herne, 1983), pp. 205–33; see also his statement in J. Beaufret, *Entretien avec F. de Towarnicki* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1984), p. 87: 'Heidegger n'a jamais rien fait qui ait pu motiver les allégations formulées contre lui' and the examination of his philosophy from a political perspective represents 'la conspiration des médiocres au nom de la médiocrité'. Essentially the same defence is offered later by Vattimo in his claim that Heidegger's thought is more important than that of his accusers.

46 See *Annales d'histoire révisionniste*, 3 (automne–hiver 1987), pp. 204–5; for a discussion of the link between Beaufret and Robert Faurisson, see Michel Kajman, *Le Monde*, vendredi 22 janvier 1988, pp. 1, 18. The following passage (cited in Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, tr. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 3) provides an idea of Faurisson's view: 'I have analyzed thousands of documents. I have tirelessly pursued specialists and historians with my questions. I have tried in vain to find a single former deportee capable of proving to me that he had really seen, with his own eyes, a gas chamber.' This form of historical revisionism is fundamentally different from the more benign discussion in German intellectual circles where the controversy does not concern the existence, but rather the interpretation of, the so-called final solution. See 'Historikerstreit'. *Die*

*Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der national-sozialistischen Juden vernichtung* (Zürich/Munich: Piper Verlag, 1987). For a philosophical reaction to Faurisson, see Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, pp. 3–4.

47 For a good recent survey of his thought, see Werner Jung, *Georg Lukács* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1989).

48 See Georg Lukács, *Existentialisme ou Marxisme?* (Paris: Nagel, 1948).

49 See Georg Lukács, *Existentialismus oder Marxismus?* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1951).

50 See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Les aventures de la dialectique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955), chap. 2: 'Le Marxisme "occidental"', pp. 43–80.

51 See Jean-Michel Palmier, *Les écrits politiques de Heidegger* (Paris: L'Herne, 1968).

52 Palmier argues that Heidegger made two basic mistakes: he thought that through the Nazi party he could realize an intuition he perceived in Ernst Jünger's book, *Der Arbeiter*; and he thought that within Nazism he could develop a philosophical dimension since he deluded himself into perceiving within it a spiritual potentiality. For a statement of his view, see Jean-Michel Palmier, 'Heidegger et le national-socialisme', in M. Haar (ed.), *Cahier de l'Herne. Heidegger* (Paris: L'Herne, 1983), pp. 409–46. For a summary of Palmier's criticism, see *ibid.*, pp. 443–4.

53 See Jean-Pierre Faye, 'Heidegger et la révolution', *Médiations*, 3 (automne 1961), pp. 151–9. Faye has continued to develop his critique of Heidegger. For its most recent form, see Jean-Pierre Faye, *La raison narrative* (Balland, 1990).

54 See Jean-Pierre Faye, 'Attaques Nazies contre Heidegger', *Médiations*, 5 (été 1962), pp. 137–51.

55 See François Fédier, 'Trois Attaques contre Heidegger', *Critique*, 234 (novembre 1966), pp. 883–904. The discussion begun by Fédier including a series of responses and rejoinders, ended with contributions by Bondy and Fédier. See François Bondy, 'Une lettre de Heidegger à François Bondy', *Critique* (1968), pp. 433–5, and François Fédier, 'Le Point', *Critique* (1968), pp. 435–7.

56 See Aimé Patri, 'Serait-ce une querelle d'allemand?', *Critique*, 237 (février 1967), pp. 296–7.

57 See Robert Minder, 'Langage et Nazisme', *Critique*, 237 (février 1967), pp. 284–7.

58 See Jean-Pierre Faye, 'La lecture et l'énoncé', *Critique*, 237 (février 1967), pp. 288–95.

59 See François Fédier, 'A propos de Heidegger. Une lecture dénoncée', *Critique*, 242, pp. 672–86.

60 See the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 245, Donnerstag 22 Oktober 1987, 'Bis zuletzt ein Nazi Heidegger im grellen Licht/Eine Pariser Sensation', p. 11.

61 See *Die Zeit*, 46, 6 November 1987, 'Wie braun war Heidegger? Die postmodernen Grossfurthsen und ihr deutscher Ahnherr'.

62 See Gianni Vattimo, 'Il pensiero di Heidegger più forte di chi lo accusa', *La Stampa*, 14 November 1987.

63 Christian Jambet, Preface to Victor Farias, *Heidegger et le nazisme*, p. 14 – translation Tom Rockmore.

64 Hugo Ott, 'Wege und Abwege. Zu Victor Farias' kritischer Heidegger-Studie', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 275, Freitag, 27 November 1987, p. 67: 'In Frankreich ist ein Himmel eingestürzt – le ciel des philosophes'.

65 See Roger-Pol Droit, *Le Monde*.

66 See Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt, 'Heidegger, militant et penseur nazi', *Le Matin*, jeudi 15 octobre 1987, p. 16.

67 See Emmanuel Martineau, 'De la haine de la pensée aux "faurissonneries"', *Le Matin*, lundi 26 octobre 1987.

68 See Alain Finkielkraut, 'Heidegger: la question et le procès', *Le Monde*, mardi 5 janvier 1988, p. 2.

69 See Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt, 'Heidegger: l'allemand et le ressentiment', *Le Monde*, mercredi 13 janvier 1988.

70 See Jean Baudrillard, 'Nécroscopie autour de Martin Heidegger', *Libération*, mercredi 27 janvier 1988, pp. 1-2.

71 See Jacques Derrida, 'Un entretien avec Jacques Derrida. Heidegger, l'enfer des philosophes', *Le nouvel observateur*, 6 novembre 1988.

72 See Victor Farias, 'Victor Farias: pas d'accord avec Jacques Derrida', *Le nouvel observateur*, 47, 27 novembre-3 décembre 1987.

73 See Pierre Aubenque, 'Encore Heidegger et le nazisme', *Le Débat* (janvier-février 1988), pp. 113-23. This issue, which provides a good point of entry into the recent French discussion of Heidegger and Nazism, contains a diverse collection of articles by P. Aubenque, H. Crétella, M. Deguy, F. Fédier, G. Granel, S. Moses and A. Renaut under the heading of 'Heidegger, la philosophie et le nazisme' as well as a collection of twelve texts under the heading of 'Martin Heidegger: Textes politiques 1933-1934'.

74 See Pascal David, 'Heidegger et le nazisme. A propos du livre de V. Farias de même intitulé', *Les Etudes philosophiques* (avril-juin 1988), pp. 257-63.

75 See also Heidegger. *Questions ouvertes*, Collège international de philosophie (Paris: Editions Osiris, 1988). This volume contains a diverse collection of articles on different themes presented at a seminar organized by the Collège international de philosophie. Under the heading of 'Histoire, Politique', there is a series of articles by J. Rolland, Eliane Escoubas, P. Lacoue-Labarthe, J. Derrida, M. Abensour and E. Lévinas on various aspects of the theme of Heidegger and Nazism. For a review covering the works by Fédier, Bourdieu, Lacoue-Labarthe, Renaut and Ferry and Lyotard, see Jean-Michel Palmier, 'Heidegger et le national-socialisme', *Magazine littéraire*, 255 (juin 1988), pp. 89-93.

76 See Pierre Bourdieu, *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1988). For a more recent French study of Heidegger's language, see Henri Meschonnic, *Le langage Heidegger* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1990).

77 Bourdieu, *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger*, p. 7.

78 On the importance of Heidegger's refusal of an anthropological reading of his thought, see Martin Heidegger, *La lettre à Jean Wahl*, cited in Bourdieu, *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger*, p. 114.

79 See Bourdieu, *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger*, p. 8.

80 On this point, see Bourdieu, *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger*, p. 59, where he refers to Toni Cassirer's well-known comment and 61n., where he discusses the influence of H. von Treitschke on later German thought, including the German academy. See also a letter of Husserl to Dietrich Mahnke, dated 4 May 1933, in which Husserl writes: 'Vorangegangen ist der von ihm [Heidegger - T.R.] vollzogene Abbruch des Verkehrs mit mir (und schon bald nach seiner Berufung) und in den letzten Jahren sein immer stärker zum Ausdruck kommander Antisemitismus - auch gegenüber seiner Gruppe begeisterter jüdischer Schüler und in der Fakultät.' Cited by Hugo Ott in Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert and Otto Pöggeler, *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), p. 69. This contradicts the widespread view, represented by

Pöggeler, *ibid.*, p. 17, that the story of Heidegger's anti-Semitism is at best apocryphal.

81 See Bourdieu, *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger*, p. 67.

82 See Bourdieu, *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger*, pp. 107–8.

83 See Bourdieu, *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger*, p. 10.

84 See Bourdieu, *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger*, p. 102.

85 See Bourdieu, *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger*, p. 115.

86 See Bourdieu, *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger*, p. 117.

87 See Bourdieu, *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger*, p. 118.

88 See Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger et 'les juifs'* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1988), pp. 97–101.

89 See Jürgen Habermas, 'Die Moderne ein unvollendetes Projekt' in Jürgen Habermas, *Kleine politische Schriften I–IV* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1981), pp. 444–64.

90 'L'affaire Heidegger est une affaire "française"', in Lyotard, *Heidegger et 'les juifs'*, p. 16.

91 See Lyotard, *Heidegger et 'les juifs'*, p. 52; see also *ibid.*, p. 71 'judéo-christianisme'; p. 73, 'société'; p. 103, 'politique'; p. 146, 'faute'; p. 153, 'Celan', etc.

92 'Penser l'affaire Heidegger', Lyotard, *Heidegger et 'les juifs'*, p. 87.

93 See Lyotard, *Heidegger et 'les juifs'*, p. 90; see also *ibid.*, p. 109.

94 See Lyotard, *Heidegger et 'les juifs'*, p. 95.

95 'La méditation anamnésique de ce qui aura eu lieu dans la "politique" heideggerienne', in Lyotard, *Heidegger et 'les juifs'*, p. 103.

96 See Lyotard, *Heidegger et 'les juifs'*, p. 110.

97 See Lyotard, *Heidegger et 'les juifs'*, p. 111; for an initial discussion of this hypothesis, see *ibid.*, pp. 115–20.

98 See Lyotard, *Heidegger et 'les juifs'*, p. 148.

99 Lyotard here contradicts such French commentators as Aubenque, who directly deny the political nature of Heidegger's work. For Aubenque's denial, see Aubenque, 'Encore Heidegger et le nazisme'. *Le Débat* (janvier–février 1988), pp. 118–19.

100 See François Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1988).

101 'Le rectorat n'a cependant rien d'une parenthèse dans la vie de Heidegger et il vaut la peine de lire les "textes politiques" de la période de 1933–1934', Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 22.

102 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 67.

103 Or as he says, 'lever l'accusation portée contre Heidegger', Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 30.

104 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 31.

105 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, pp. 31–3.

106 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 37.

107 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 162.

108 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 185.

109 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 114.

110 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 115.

111 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, pp. 115, 147.

112 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 116.

113 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 136.

114 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 152.

115 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, pp. 198–9.

116 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 234.

117 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 237.

118 See Fédier, *Heidegger: anatomie d'un scandale*, p. 240.

119 Among the French Heideggerians, Lacoue-Labarthe has been most persistent in pursuing the problem raised by Heidegger's Nazism in all its many variations. Heidegger's later view of the role of poetry in the disclosure of truth led to his encounter with Paul Celan. For a recent effort to study the role of poetry based on that encounter, see Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *La poésie comme expérience* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1986).

120 A short list of his writings on or about Heidegger includes *La vérité en peinture*, *Ousia*, *Grammé*, 'Geschlecht. Différence sexuelle, différence ontologique', 'La main de Heidegger (Geschlecht II)', etc. His writings on Heidegger have recently been brought together in a single volume. See Jacques Derrida, *Heidegger et la question* (Paris: Flammarion, 1990).

121 For denial of the importance of the distinction or distinctions between the Derridean approach and so-called orthodox Heideggerianism in France, see Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, *Heidegger et les modernes* (Paris: Grasset, 1988), pp. 99ff.

122 The latter aspect has not been lost on orthodox, or Derridean, Heideggerians. It is significant that his study has in fact been praised by Heideggerians for its Heideggerian quality. For instance, David Krell, in a long review in part intended to defend Heidegger against Farias' criticism, makes this point. See David Farrell Krell, 'Spiriting Heidegger. A discussion of *De l'esprit: Heidegger et la question*, by Jacques Derrida', in *Research in Phenomenology*, 18 (1988), pp. 205-30.

123 See Derrida, *Heidegger et la question*, p. 11.

124 See Martin Heidegger, 'Die Sprache im Gedicht, Eine Erörterung von Georg Trakls Gedicht', 1953, in *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959).

125 See Derrida, *Heidegger et la question*, p. 12.

126 See Derrida, *Heidegger et la question*, p. 24.

127 See Derrida, *Heidegger et la question*, p. 156.

128 See Derrida, *Heidegger et la question*, p. 155.

129 See Derrida, *Heidegger et la question*, p. 64.

130 See Derrida, *Heidegger et la question*, p. 66.

131 See Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *L'imitation des modernes. Typographies II* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1986).

132 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *L'imitation des modernes. Typographies II*, p. 184.

133 See Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1987).

134 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, p. 14.

135 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, p. 75.

136 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, p. 28.

137 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, p. 35.

138 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, p. 38.

139 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, p. 39.

140 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, p. 43.

141 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, p. 64.

142 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, p. 86.

143 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, p. 87; see also *ibid.*, p. 91.

144 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, p. 91; see also *ibid.*, p. 115.

145 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, p. 150.

146 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, p. 58.

147 See Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique. Heidegger, l'art et la politique*, p. 59.

148 Ferry and Renault, *Heidegger et les modernes*, p. 12.

149 See Luc Ferry and Alain Renault, *La Pensée 68. Essai sur l'antihumanisme contemporain* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985).

150 Ferry and Renault, *Heidegger et les modernes*, p. 40.

151 See Ferry and Renault, *Heidegger et les modernes*, p. 10.

152 See Ferry and Renault, *Heidegger et les modernes*, p. 12.

153 Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique*, p. 58.

154 See Ferry and Renault, *Heidegger et les modernes*, p. 117.

155 See Ferry and Renault, *Heidegger et les modernes*, p. 149.

156 See Ferry and Renault, *Heidegger et les modernes*, p. 155.

157 See Ferry and Renault, *Heidegger et les modernes*, p. 227.

158 See Ferry and Renault, *Heidegger et les modernes*, p. 170.

159 See Ferry and Renault, *Heidegger et les modernes*, p. 172.

160 See Ferry and Renault, *Heidegger et les modernes*, pp. 224–5.

161 See Heidegger, 'Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus', in *Martin Heidegger. Frühe Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1972), p. 141: 'Es fehlt dem Mittelalter, was gerade einen Wesenszug des modernen Geistes ausmacht; die Befreiung des Subjekts von der Gebundenheit an die Umgebung, die Befestigung im eigenen Leben.'

162 See Nicolas Tertulian, 'Trois témoignages: Löwith, Jaspers, Marcuse', *La Quinzaine littéraire*, 496 (1–15 novembre 1987), pp. 10–11; 'A propos de Heidegger, la manipulation des textes a tout de même des limites', *La Quinzaine littéraire*, 515 (1–15 septembre 1988), pp. 18–21; 'Quand le discours heideggerien se mue en prise de position politique', *La Quinzaine littéraire*, 523 (1–5 novembre 1988), p. 26; 'Esquives, abandons et nouvelles inexactitudes; Un tournant dans les recherches sur Heidegger', *La Quinzaine littéraire*, 526 (16–28 janvier 1989), pp. 19–21; Nicolas Tertulian, 'Heidegger et le national-socialisme. Aspects et points de vue', *Tramonto dell'occidente?*, ed. Gian Mario Cazzaniga, Domenico Losurdo and Livio Sichirollo (Napoli: Istituto per gli Studi Filosofici, 1989), pp. 165–206.

163 See Dominique Janicaud, *L'ombre de cette pensée. Heidegger et la question politique* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1990).

164 See Henri Meschonnic, *Le langage Heidegger* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1990).

165 For Janicaud's earlier view of Heidegger, see Dominique Janicaud and

Jean-François Mattéi, *La métaphysique à la limite. Cinq études sur Heidegger* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1983).

166 See Janicaud, *L'ombre de cette pensée*, p. 49.

167 For other versions of this argument see Michael Zimmerman, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity, Technology, Politics, Art* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990) and Richard Wolin, *The Politics of Being: The Political Thought of Martin Heidegger* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990). See also Tom Rockmore, *On Heidegger's Nazism and Philosophy* (Los Angeles, Berkeley and London: University of California Press – forthcoming).

168 This insistence is present in his writings as early as the initial lecture series. See Martin Heidegger, 'Die Idee der Philosophie und das Weltanschauungsproblem', in Martin Heidegger, 'Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie', *Frühe Freiburger Vorlesungen Kriegsnotsemester 1919 und Sommersemester 1919*, ed. Bernd Heimbüchel (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1987). It is restated in his review of Jaspers' *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, and in numerous other writings.

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## Philosophy and politics: by way of Martin Heidegger

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Joseph Margolis

There are two quite different issues regarding philosophy and politics that Martin Heidegger's career as a professional philosopher poses that we cannot ignore. One concerns the question whether Heidegger's philosophy is inseparable, in whole or in part, from his political commitment as a Nazi; and, more generally, whether there is a principled distinction between philosophical and political convictions that can be made out just where the analysis of the human condition is at stake. The other concerns the question whether (and if so, how) Heidegger's original inquiries decisively affect *our* sense of the constraints under which moral and political legitimation henceforth obtains.

It is easy to see that if the answer to the second question is significant in an affirmative way, then we cannot deny that Heidegger's philosophy must bear on the viability and validity of inquiries that do not share his own political convictions, whether or not we find it possible to disjoin philosophy and politics altogether. Since there can be no doubt that the answer to the second question *is* in the affirmative, it cannot be the case that Heidegger's philosophy can be completely or largely rejected simply because, as he worked out his own views, he did so to a significant degree, perhaps largely, possibly even essentially, as a proto-Nazi, a public Nazi, a deviant Nazi, a utopian Nazi in defeat.

Now, it does also appear that Heidegger *did* produce his philosophy chiefly as all those sorts of Nazi. The entire direction of the analysis of his work, both early and late, for instance the analysis of the hitherto largely unknown *Beiträge*,<sup>1</sup> confirms more and more compellingly (and dishearteningly) that Heidegger was indeed extraordinarily singleminded philosophically from the very beginning of his career,<sup>2</sup> and that the nerve of his entire endeavour really concerned the indissolubility, in the largest sense, of philosophy and politics. In fact, given the truth of this judgment, it is much less surprising that Michel Foucault confesses in a pointed



way, in what seems to have been his own last interview, that Heidegger was a most important influence in his own work<sup>3</sup> – despite the fact that Foucault never discusses Heidegger's actual theories and despite the plausible sense (contestable in a deep way, it must also be admitted<sup>4</sup>) in which Foucault was radically opposed to the moral and political convictions Heidegger represented.

In any case, the discussion of Heidegger is particularly arresting, intellectually. Just because he was a Nazi, his philosophy organically involves his Nazi proclivities and convictions. It was a theorizing influence throughout a large part of the twentieth century both in philosophy and beyond philosophy *and* among opponents and would-be opponents of Nazism; *and* (so) *we*, despite our failing to disjoin his philosophy and his politics, cannot quite manage to dismiss Heidegger's philosophy altogether, or to give up using or debating its findings and claims in a featured way in inquiries that are clearly opposed to anything like Heidegger's Nazism. We obviously do not feel bound to treat Heidegger merely as a Nazi. There can be no doubt that the situation is a unique one.

## I

There are two closely related themes that span Heidegger's *Being and Time* and the Marburg lectures of 1927 (translated as *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*) that bear directly on the connection between philosophy and politics: the first concerns Heidegger's repudiation of canonical philosophy from, say, Aristotle to Kant; the second, Heidegger's radical distinction between 'scientific philosophy' and philosophy as *Weltanschauung*. Both themes betray certain doubtful features of Heidegger's own line of argument: they *could*, certainly, have been formed to serve quite deliberately Heidegger's Nazism. But they confirm in a wider sense the close conceptual connection Heidegger acknowledged between philosophy and politics; and, what is more interesting, both are marred on philosophical grounds and both are redeemable on philosophical grounds, in ways that continue to confirm the strong connection between philosophy and politics – without implicating Nazism at all.

It is here, of course, that Heidegger's more permanent contribution may be discerned; for, ironically, the correction of his *philosophical* mistakes are themselves informed, at least in part or at least by parallel speculations, by a more rigorous application of his own insights into the puzzles of the connection between philosophy and politics. Grasping that, we are led to the conclusion originally broached, namely, that Heidegger's intellectual importance in the twentieth century can be justified well beyond the local link between his philosophy and his use of it (even his

opportunistic reshaping of it again and again) as a Nazi of the various stripes already mentioned. No doubt the admission is a disturbing one. But honesty at this late date is a political act – as well as a philosophical one. It must be so, on the argument being mounted.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger charges philosophy with ‘the task of destroying the history of ontology’ (*Destruktion, destruieren*).<sup>5</sup> Heidegger did not mean, here, to destroy ontology or metaphysics in the usual sense of ‘destroy’, that is, to eliminate it altogether, to cause it to cease to exist or to cease to be able to be recovered. He meant, rather, what he took to be the phenomenological project of ‘deconstructing’ or ‘de-structuring’ the accumulating (and misleading) history of ontology, so that whatever *it could recover* would no longer be read erroneously in terms of the false privilege of the canon but now in terms of his own deeper understanding of the relation between ontic and ontological inquiry:

We understand [the fundamental] task [of philosophy] as one in which by taking *the question of Being as our clue*, we are to *destroy* the traditional content of ancient ontology until we arrive at those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being – the ways which have guided us ever since.<sup>6</sup>

Clearly, Heidegger meant to *recover* what he thought could be recovered of ontology, by way of the new clue that ‘destroys’ the tradition. He actually says elsewhere, somewhat more perspicuously:

our way of exhibiting the constitution of Dasein’s Being remains only *one way* which we may take. Our *aim* is to work out the question of Being in general. The *thematic* analysis of existence, however, first needs the light of the idea of Being in general, which must be clarified beforehand. This holds particularly if we adhere to the principle which we expressed in our introduction as one by which any philosophical investigation may be gauged: that philosophy ‘is universal phenomenological ontology, and takes its departure from the hermeneutics of Dasein, which, as an analytic of *existence*, has made fast the guiding-line for all philosophical inquiry at the point where it *arises* and to which it *returns*’. This thesis, of course, is to be regarded not as a dogma, but rather as a formulation of a problem of principle which still remains ‘veiled’: can one provide *ontological* grounds for ontology, or does it require an ontical foundation? and *which* entity must take over the function of providing this foundation?<sup>7</sup>

The offending canon, which Heidegger traces incisively in Aristotle, Descartes and Kant, fails, he believes, to understand the full meaning

of the fact that 'the central problematic of all ontology is rooted in the phenomenon of time', which the analysis of Being (*Sein*), 'rightly seen and rightly explained', would show. Correspondingly, he holds, 'temporality [*Zeitlichkeit*] [is] the meaning of the Being of that entity which we call "Dasein"'. What Heidegger means is that the analysis of Being (a fortiori, the Being of *Dasein* itself) proceeds by way of analysing the 'average everydayness' (*Alltäglichkeit*) of 'factual *Dasein*'; but in doing that, it merely achieves a 'provisional' and 'incomplete' anthropology of *Dasein*; it cannot rightly 'interpret . . . its meaning' (which, of course, requires a grasp of its 'ontological' (in one sense, its temporal nature) and not merely its 'ontical' structure (in particular, whatever temporal structure may be derivatively ascribed to distributed objects – including 'factual *Dasein*' – by virtue of the temporal structures of *Dasein*'s subjectivity). As Heidegger puts it: 'Dasein has a pre-ontological being as its ontically constitutive state. Dasein is in such a way as to be something which understands something like Being.' *Dasein* does so

with time as its standpoint. Time [he says] must be brought to light – and genuinely conceived – as the horizon for all understanding of Being and for any way of interpreting it. In order for us to discern this, time needs to be explicated *primordially as the horizon for the understanding of Being, and in terms of temporality as the Being of Dasein, which understands Being*.<sup>8</sup>

The novel and difficult theme, here, is that *Dasein*'s temporality, which is the ontological import of its ontic (or its ordinary discursible) structure, is essential to its pre-ontological disposition and capacity for understanding Being (which cannot be ontically analysed at all): that constitutive condition accounts for its (equally ontological) disposition of 'historicality' (*Geschichtlichkeit*) in virtue of which, *ontically*, it construes its ('objective') world by 'historizing' it discursively (*geschehen*). As a result, the 'elemental historicity of *Dasein* may remain hidden from *Dasein* itself'. It *may* discover it by way of 'discover[ing] tradition. . . . But historiography – or more precisely historicity [*Historizität*] – is possible as a kind of Being which the inquiring *Dasein* may possess, only because historicity is a determining characteristic for *Dasein* in the very basis of its Being.<sup>9</sup> So *Dasein*'s grasp of its own (ontological) nature is achieved by reversing the order of capacitation by and in the order of inquiry – provided it eventually comes to understand that what it is discovering is *not* explicable in terms of the discursive categories of the early (ontic) phase of its characteristic work. Furthermore, on Heidegger's view, this is only one possible way of proceeding. One might even imagine that something like the *Kehre* of the *Letter on Humanism* is

already adumbrated here.<sup>10</sup> Whether or not this is so, we cannot fail to remark, in hindsight, the easy *passage* from the one stage to the other.

Heidegger immediately follows this analysis, in *Being and Time*, by charging Kant with having prolonged the Cartesian (the canonical) error in a double way: first, by utterly neglecting 'the problem of Being'; and second, by failing to bring 'the phenomenon of time back into the subject again' (that is, into *Dasein*, construed 'phenomenologically'). Kant failed, therefore, to perceive that there was even a problem in 'the decisive connection between time and the "I think"'.<sup>11</sup>

## II

The strenuous and rather baffling nature of all this is more apparent than real. What Heidegger is claiming is, first of all, that *Being* (*Sein*) rather than plural, individuated things or 'beings' (*Seiende*) is the proper, even essential concern of philosophy; second, that whatever may be said regarding *Seiende* must be construed as pertinent to the possibilities that *Sein* 'first' provides; third, that that defines the inherent conceptual dependence of ontic distinctions on, and its subordination to, ontological discoveries; fourth, that there is no true universality that can be assigned to the merely ontic but only to the ontological; and fifth, that our understanding of this relationship (that is, our human understanding) is made possible (perhaps not exclusively) by the dawning of *Dasein*'s self-understanding (our understanding as 'ontico-ontological' incarnations of *Dasein*<sup>12</sup>) of its being ontologically structured as it is. In the *Phenomenology*, Heidegger explicitly says: '*Being is the proper and sole theme of philosophy*';<sup>13</sup> and, in *Being and Time*, he says: '*Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein's Being*. *Dasein* is ontically distinctive in that it is ontological.'<sup>14</sup> This fifth theme is contested, of course, in Heidegger's papers following the *Kehre*. (We shall consider the matter, below.)

Effectively, this means that *all* discourse that proceeds by way of categories, conceptual distinctions addressed to *plural, numbered, individuated, ontic entities*, depends for its relevance and validity on its issuing from the peculiar *ontological* encounter between a certain uniquely endowed ontic *Seiendes* (*Dasein*, or 'factual *Dasein*') and *Sein* itself, which is utterly numberless and utterly structureless. That is, *Sein* cannot be made to conform to the referential and predicative devices (and categories) of enunciative discourse; but it is not (on Heidegger's view) therefore impossible to determine 'its meaning', it is intelligible:

'Being' cannot have the character of an entity. Thus we cannot apply to Being the concept of 'definition' as presented in traditional logic,

which itself has its foundations in ancient ontology and which, within certain limits, provides a justifiable way of characterizing 'entities'. The indefinability of Being does not eliminate the question of its meaning; it demands that we look that question in the face.<sup>15</sup>

This means, of course, that both theoretical and practical discourse – which inescapably involve numbered, individuated entities – depend on a 'ground' (the postulated phenomenological encounter between *Dasein* and *Sein*) that precludes, by way of its ('higher') temporality, any privileged invariance or necessity regarding such entities: either by way of an escape, from their provisionality, to changeless discoveries governing such plural entities; or by way of generalizing among them to such invariances.<sup>16</sup>

Therein lies the failed presumption of classical Greek philosophy and its most celebrated progeny, particularly in Plato's, Aristotle's, medieval, Descartes', Kant's, and Hegel's philosophies (all succinctly condemned in the space of a few pages). But the new philosophical orientation Heidegger offers is not without its own difficulties. For, first of all, it itself *depends* for its validity on discoveries accessible to *us* as historical instantiations of *that Dasein* that is putatively in a certain privileged, ontologically receptive role *vis-à-vis* numberless *Sein*; and second, *that* very discovery – the discovery about the nature of such discoveries – is also a discovery of particular entities in historical time. For example, it is some 'factual *Dasein*', some philosopher, in effect – Heidegger says – that discerns that 'Being is always the Being of an entity'.<sup>17</sup>

The lesson to be drawn is uniform for theoretical and practical inquiry (science and politics, for instance). It is simply this: no science and no morality discursively addressed to plural *Seiende* can take a necessary, invariant, universal, transhistorical or suprahistorical, categorically normative, or transcendently validated form as such. All ontic discourse is provisional, partial, historically transient, subject to change under conditions that ontic discourse cannot fathom, radically contingent: to adhere to its findings merely as such is rationally indefensible. 'Inquiry', says Heidegger, 'as a kind of seeking, must be guided beforehand by what is sought. So the meaning of Being must already be available to us in some way . . . we always conduct our activities in an understanding of Being'.<sup>18</sup> Hence, since 'Being is always the Being of an entity',

the totality of entities can, in accordance with its various domains, become a field for laying bare and delimiting certain definite areas of subject-matter. These areas, on their part (for instance, history, Nature, space, life, *Dasein*, language, and the like), can serve as objects which corresponding scientific investigations may take as their respective themes. Scientific research accomplishes, roughly and

naively, the demarcation and initial fixing of the areas of subject-matter. The basic structures of any such area have already been worked out after a fashion in our pre-scientific ways of experiencing and interpreting that domain of Being in which the area of the subject-matter is itself confined. The 'basic concepts' which thus arise remain our proximal clues for disclosing this area concretely for the first time. And although research may always lean towards this positive approach, its real progress comes not so much from collecting results and storing them away in 'manuals' as from inquiring into the ways in which each particular area is basically constituted [*Grundverfassung*] – an inquiry to which we have been driven mostly by reacting against just such an increase in information.<sup>19</sup>

Narrowly construed, Heidegger is here opposing *every* form of foundationalism and cognitive privilege. He himself draws attention to the fact that he is attacking the foundationalism of mathematics and the sciences. In this he is still very close to his mentor, Husserl.<sup>20</sup> But he goes on, of course, as did Husserl himself in a *radically* different way, to discuss the 'ontological' (or phenomenological) *foundations* of those sciences:

The question of Being aims . . . at ascertaining the *a priori* condition not only for the possibility of the sciences which examine entities as entities of such and such a type, and in so doing, already operate with an understanding of Being, but also for the possibility of those ontologies themselves which are prior to the ontical sciences and which provide their foundations. *Basically, all ontology, no matter how rich and firmly compacted a system of categories it has at its disposal, remains blind and perverted from its ownmost aim, if it has not first adequately clarified the meaning of Being, and conceived this clarification as its fundamental task.*<sup>21</sup>

In short, Heidegger, like Husserl, moves in the direction of the phenomenologically apodictic with respect to the use of the categories of the understanding applied to the distributed things of our everyday world. In this regard, both are Kantian and both are opponents of Kant. But there the similarity ceases. For Husserl attempts to determine the inherent invariant structure of the concepts with which we (as Transcendental Ego) first 'constitute', phenomenologically, the (*already experientially given*) world in which we live; and Heidegger treats the givenness of the world itself as a late, transient and potentially replaceable artefact of the 'prior' encounter of *Dasein* and *Sein* that *cannot* itself be analysed in either Kant's or Husserl's way.

So Husserl's interest in the invariant structure of our concepts is con-

trolled by the efforts of a postulated ideal rational intelligence (the Transcendental Ego) to determine whether and in what way those concepts, the concepts we employ in our sciences, mathematics and elsewhere are subject to limitations of change when applied to the *Lebenswelt* we inhabit.<sup>22</sup> To put the point in a somewhat vulgar way, Husserl is a super-Descartes or a super-Kant; but Heidegger repudiates Descartes and Kant – and Husserl, ultimately. For Heidegger's certitude regarding foundations is thoroughly *noumenal*, in the Kantian sense; whereas Husserl heroically treats his own phenomenology as the most inclusive and ultimate form possible of *phenomenally*-governed transcendental reflection.

### III

If Heidegger is right in emphasizing the radical contingency of the historical and artefactual nature of *our concepts*, then Husserl is off on the wrong track altogether as far as any asymptotic approximation to the invariance of our concepts is concerned; although a phenomenologically more labile review of the structure of our concepts, within the terms of a historicized critique, would still be useful.<sup>23</sup> But in the attempt to understand Heidegger's linking of philosophy and politics, we cannot rightly rest with this quite plausible criticism. Husserl genuinely retreated from what should have been his effort (through the acknowledged influence of Max Weber) to come to terms with historicity and social construction, in writing the *Crisis* volume. In any case, the contingency of our concepts in ordinary use cannot fail to infect their phenomenological review as well: there cannot, on Kantian-like grounds, be a hierarchy of cognitive resources. The same weakness must infect the entire canon Heidegger discloses.

Heidegger appears only occasionally to have pursued in a detailed way anything like an 'ontologically' privileged science. It is certainly clear that, in general, particularly during the rectorate at Freiburg and afterwards (even when he became disillusioned with Hitler), he conceived the sciences as rightly informed by what rightly informed the political and moral orientation of the German world.<sup>24</sup> The supreme expression of this conviction is, without question, Heidegger's rectoral address on assuming the post, 27 May 1933, at the University of Freiburg. There, addressing the question of 'the spiritual *leadership* of this university', Heidegger remarks that the question is rightly answered 'only and above all when the leaders [*Führer*] are first led themselves – led by the relentlessness of that spiritual order that expresses its history through the fate of the German nation'. 'Has this essence [*Wesen*]', Heidegger asks, 'real

power to put a stamp onto our existence [*Dasein*]? Only if we wholeheartedly *want* this spirit.' Hence,

the self-determination of the German university is the original common will to its essence. . . . To will the essence of the German university is to will that science [German science] to be informed by the historical spiritual mission of the German people. Science and German fate must *above all* gain power in the will to essence [*Wesenwillen*].<sup>25</sup>

Here, the crucial complications begin to surface in a legible way. For, on this thesis, Heidegger no longer restricts himself to a merely phenomenological (his own phenomenological) reading of the fateful mistake of the Western *ontic* canon that, contrary to the de-privileging, negative function of *Zeitlichkeit*, presumes to discern the conceptual necessities of, say, Aristotle, or Descartes, or Kant or Husserl; he now claims a positive, cognitively superior, prescriptive – in fact, *noumenal* – instruction directing the work of science and political morality.

Husserl had been mistaken in attenuating, as far as he could, the resources of a *phenomenally grounded transcendental or critical reflection*. On Heidegger's view, the argument against Kant must ultimately be effective against Husserl as well. But the instruction of the *Rektorsrede* is apparently drawn from the *phenomenological* powers of *Dasein* – a collective *Dasein*, the *Dasein* of the German nation that individual persons may share only by a decisive act of will; and yet, it affords a pronouncement that bears directly on the *ontically* regularized and individuated lives and commitments of particular persons. On a strict Kantian reading, it would be illicit to derive determinately valid findings or directives regarding empirical science or historical commitment from *any* noumenal sources: for, such sources are not discursible at all (though, on Kant's view: again, dubiously), we *are* entitled to *treat* ourselves as if we were noumenally competent agents.

Hence, Heidegger is committed, certainly in the *Rektorsrede*, perhaps already in *Being and Time*, certainly in the *Letter on Humanism* and 'The question concerning technology', to an utterly illicit inverted Platonism of historical destiny construed as a disclosure of the *essence* of the 'ontico-ontological' existence of *Dasein* (taken aggregatively and collectively). What, for instance, can we make of that remarkable passage in *Being and Time* that, read forward to the *Rektorsrede* and beyond, declares:

if fateful *Dasein*, as Being-in-the-world, exists essentially in Being-with-Others, its historizing is a co-historizing and is determinative for it as *destiny* [*Geschick*]. This is how we designate the historizing of the community, of a people. Destiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates, any more than Being-with-one-another



can be conceived as the occurring together of several Subjects. Our fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities. Only in communicating and in struggling does the power of destiny become free. Dasein's fateful destiny in and with its 'generation' goes to make up the full authentic historizing of Dasein. . . . *Only authentic temporality which is at the same time finite, makes possible something like fate – that is to say, authentic historicity.*<sup>26</sup>

It seems quite impossible to construe this pronouncement in any other way than as a noumenally privileged utterance: an utterance that, escaping the contingencies of mere ontic (phenomenal) discourse, discerns an essentially valid instruction *about* our historical existence (that is, the existence of the German nation) that, depending on 'authentic temporality', is phenomenologically prescriptive (noumenally prescriptive, by some monstrous Platonist/historized mixture) *for* our individuated lives. The pronouncement is utterly arbitrary, indefensible on any pertinent grounds at all, completely incompatible with the *Kantian* cast of Heidegger's own work – that is, with his own severe correction of Kant's tendency to impose illicit noumenal constraints on his own transcendental reflections.

This is perhaps the import of Heidegger's having brought Kant's famous three questions (in 'the canon of pure reason'), in the *Critique of Pure Reason*,<sup>27</sup> to rest 'in the fourth [question] "What is man?" For the determination of the final ends of human reason results from the explanation of what man is. It is to these ends that philosophy in the academic sense also must relate.'<sup>28</sup> In effect, theoretical and practical concerns must be joined (as the *Rektoratsrede* makes clear). Hence, philosophy and politics are joined in joining science and political morality in the phenomenologically disclosed destiny of the German people – *in* the ontically determinate moments of the historical time they share.

But the argument is entirely illicit. Ironically, the usual criticism of Heidegger's *ontologically* oriented account of the empirical sciences is plausibly pursued on the grounds that, there, he imports too much from the 'theory-dominant [*ontic*] prejudices' of the traditional view of science, notably along the lines favoured by Husserl.<sup>29</sup> The deeper 'Platonism' is treated, then, as more atmospheric than not, if it is broached at all. But regarding practical life in the narrower and more conventional sense, Heidegger can, with justice, only be said to have mounted a strong argument against: (1) any noumenal intrusions into phenomenal or historical life that would claim *ontic* credentials of a prescriptive sort (whether by way of Kant's objectivism or by way of Hegel's historicism or by way of Husserl's phenomenology); and (2) any self-legitimizing or

normatively universal or invariant rules of phenomenal or historical life itself.

Furthermore, if the foregoing argument is compelling, then, by default (*only*), contrary to his own intention, Heidegger also 'demonstrates' that: (3) there cannot be any viable noumenal intrusions of an *ontological* sort either (phenomenological, on his own account, or 'hermeneutic' or 'transcendental'<sup>30</sup>) by which determinate direction may be given to our 'ontic' or 'ontico-ontological' life. The reason is simply this: on Heidegger's own theory, these 'higher' discoveries are accessible to 'factual *Dasein*', which is first individuated and characterized in the discursive terms of the canon Heidegger wishes to 'destroy' or supersede. It does no good claiming that *that* individuated entity (a *Seiendes* among others) possesses as well an 'ontological' nature that cannot be grasped in terms of ontic categories, though it is indeed intelligible. For, it is *of* that individuated *Dasein* that *that* nature *is* predicated. The very intelligibility of what is thus claimed – particularly, its being predicatively pertinent *in this or that case* – presupposes the competence of *Dasein*'s ordinary categories. It is idle to quarrel about whether there is any discernible (not: demonstrable!) difference between the ontic and the ontological, for the pertinence of the ontological is, on the argument, entirely dependent upon, and subject to the cognitive validity of, *Dasein*'s *ontic* pronouncements. And of course, Heidegger himself came to be profoundly dissatisfied with his own failure, in *Being and Time*, to 'destroy' the traditional history of ontology. He found that he had simply given it (unintentionally) another inning.

Here, we may also observe (parenthetically) that the recent extravagances of post-structuralist thought (in Jean-François Lyotard for instance) and the immense confusions of Emmanuel Levinas' speculations (which are certainly one of the principal sources of the post-structuralist insistence on *l'autre* or *l'Autrui*, that either utterly escapes referential and predicative discourse altogether or, self-contradictorily, is both initially accessible to it and ultimately escapes it) are the proper progeny of Heidegger's line of argument under review here.<sup>31</sup> And, of course, it goes without saying that any attempt to link philosophy and the moral or political by way of the self-legitimizing powers of *sittlich* practices, now so much favoured in the thin Hegelianism of a great deal of contemporary American and British moral theory, is defeated out of hand by the leaner critique of the traditional canon we must share with Heidegger (objection (2), above), *without subscribing to Heidegger's strange phenomenological prophecies* – a fortiori, without sharing his Nazism.<sup>32</sup>

There you have the clue as to how to salvage Heidegger's philosophy from Heidegger's own use of it, without disconnecting philosophy and politics at all.

#### IV

We have now answered the first of our original questions. We must turn to the second.

In the 1927 Marburg lectures (the *Phenomenology*), Heidegger very trimly connects philosophy and politics:

what is meant by [world-view: *Weltanschauung*] is not only a conception of the contexture of natural things but at the same time an interpretation of the sense and purpose of the human Dasein and hence of history. A world-view always includes a view of life. A world-view grows out of an all-inclusive reflection on the world and the human Dasein, and this again happens in different ways, explicitly and consciously in individuals or by appropriating an already prevalent world-view. We grow up within such a world-view and gradually become accustomed to it. Our world-view is determined by environment – people, race, class, developmental stages of culture. . . . A world-view is not a matter of theoretical knowledge, either in respect of its origin or in relation to its use. It is not simply retained in memory like a parcel of cognitive property. Rather, it is a matter of a collective conviction which determines the current affairs of life more or less expressly and directly. A world-view is related in its meaning to the particular Dasein at any given time.<sup>33</sup>

This is *not* to say that *Weltanschauung* is philosophy. Of course, for Heidegger, it is not. But it is the view of Karl Jaspers, in his *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, which Heidegger ridicules and holds up as an example of an utterly untenable view: 'the notion of a world-view philosophy', he says, 'is simply inconceivable . . . an absurdity'.<sup>34</sup>

*Weltanschauung* is very close to what, by freeing the term from its original Marxist sense, we now usually mean by 'ideology': the abstract unity of a set of historically formed and collectively effective practices, beliefs and norms that integrate a society's largely tacit understanding of nature, its own objectives and the improvisational possibilities of aggregated behaviour by which they may be achieved – within the context of divergent such ideologies viewed both diachronically and synchronically.<sup>35</sup> Since philosophy presupposes something very much like *Weltanschauung*, in Heidegger's view, without actually being identical with it, since it presupposes *Weltanschauung* in a sense analogous to (but also profoundly different from) the Kantian sense in which transcendental considerations have application ultimately only to the phenomenal world they serve to organize conceptually, *Weltanschauung* also *presupposes* philosophy in a deeper sense (a sense in which its very origination and ultimate legitimization require the priority of the philosophical mission). One might almost

say (with some caution) that, for Heidegger, phenomenology without *Weltanschauung* is empty and *Weltanschauung* without phenomenology is blind; and, of course, that philosophy, equated with the phenomenology of Being, constitutes a cognitive source that is foundational in the order of understanding, the findings of which cannot be formulated in terms of conceptual categories suited to discourse about distributed entities. Heidegger construes philosophy, therefore, in that it is 'ontological' rather than 'ontical', as being never in violation of the Kantian injunction against discourse about the noumenal world. Nevertheless, by bifurcating the very nature of intelligible discourse, he claims to recover universal truths *at* what is effectively the noumenal level without either breaching that injunction or endorsing the failed Kantian conception of a scientific philosophy of beings – which, though not a mere *Weltanschauung*, shares with it the same 'incomplete condition':

We assert now that being is the proper and sole theme of philosophy. . . . Negatively, this means that philosophy is not a science of beings but of *being* or, as the Greek expression goes, ontology. We take this expression in the widest possible sense [Heidegger's own phenomenological sense, that pursues ontology beyond the 'ontic'] and not in the narrower one it has, say, in Scholasticism or in modern philosophy in Descartes and Leibniz. . . . Philosophy is the theoretical conceptual interpretation of being, of being's structures and its possibilities. Philosophy is ontological. In contrast, a world-view is a positing knowledge of beings and a positing attitude toward beings; it is not ontological but ontical. The formation of a world-view falls outside the range of philosophy's tasks, but not because philosophy is in an incomplete condition and does not yet suffice to give a unanimous and universally cogent answer to the questions pertinent to world-views; rather, the formation of a world-view falls outside the range of philosophy's tasks because philosophy in principle does not relate to beings. It is not because of a defect that philosophy renounces the task of forming a world-view but because of a distinctive priority: it deals with what every positing of beings, even the positing done by a world-view, must already *presuppose* essentially.<sup>36</sup>

Heidegger affirms that 'all the great philosophers since antiquity' have pursued ontology in the sense he here formulates; but, as he has also demonstrated (in his lectures of the Summer semester 1926 and the Winter semester 1926–7), as he reminds his auditors, 'they [notably, the tradition from Thomas Aquinas to Kant] had to fail'. For, of course, as they did not realize and as Heidegger urges his auditors, 'Philosophy must legitimate by its own resources its claim to be universal ontology'.<sup>37</sup>

We cannot fail to see here the correct way to integrate the lessons

of *Being and Time* and the *Phenomenology*. But the entire effort is brokenbacked, quite impossible – and, on Heidegger's own grounds. For, it cannot be true that philosophy 'in principle does not relate to beings'. It cannot be true, because the very science of being, ontology (in the sense that goes beyond the 'ontical'), is the work of a particular being (a *Seiendes*), namely, *Dasein*, whose *ontic* structure (according to Heidegger) is 'ontological' (in the special phenomenological sense he favours).

It is not merely that *some* discursively apt agent pursues philosophy. That itself poses a puzzle that needs to be examined – for instance in the way Descartes, Kant and Husserl do. And indeed, it is a puzzle Heidegger never rightly clarified in the period following the *Kehre*, when *Dasein* was denied the midwife role it plays in *Being and Time* and the *Phenomenology*. But never mind that complication for the moment. The additional point needs to be made that the 'science' of Being, in the period we are considering, is a science that implicates the special role of *Dasein*, *Dasein's* special relationship to *Sein*. This means that the disclosures of ontology (of *Sein tout court*) presuppose (and entail) the universal validity of whatever is ontically true of individuated *Dasein*; and if that is so, then there cannot be a viable bifurcation of the ontic and the ontological, of the phenomenal and the noumenal, of the *Weltanschaulich* and the philosophical, of the categorical and the existential-hermeneutic, of the Kantian and the Heideggerian. And, of course, if that is so, then Heidegger cannot but have utterly failed in his own undertaking. This difficulty signals the extraordinary conceptual pressure within Heidegger's own system leading to the desperate moment of the *Kehre* – which, of course, had its political motivation as well.

There is no being, Heidegger says, but the being of *beings*: 'Being is always the Being of an entity'. (We have already taken note of the fact.) The science of Being is the science of 'its possibilities', the *Phenomenology* says; and its possibilities are the structured plural entities that 'it' may be manifest in. So Heidegger's phenomenology is dependent on the *ontic* articulation of a world every bit as much as it is in Kant's and Husserl's philosophies, and what he now says is arbitrary and conceptually incoherent and intrinsically incompatible with his own view of things.

But it also helps to locate the privilege Heidegger presumes to assign to the 'higher' noumenal prophecy of the *Rektorsrede* and, much later, to the monstrous possibility of the self-disclosure of Being bypassing the full mediating role originally assigned *Dasein*. The first of these manoeuvres confirms Heidegger's desperate effort to improve the sense in which he could, in the early period following the *Phenomenology*, present himself to the National Socialists as capable of delivering a pertinent, fully articulated political programme grounded in his philosophy; and the second confirms Heidegger's equally desperate effort to

free himself, *at almost any cost*, from the deep inconsistency of the earlier philosophical position. In a word, in the first, Heidegger chooses utter arbitrariness and opportunism, for political reasons, at the price of coherence; and in the second, he chooses befuddlement (plain incoherence) in order to eliminate a palpable, a devastating, an ineliminable philosophical inconsistency.

But *all* of his alternatives are tarred with the same noumenal brush, and it is only by its privilege that Heidegger *is able at all* to bring philosophy and politics together *in his own terms*. Philosophy and politics remain indissoluble in a larger sense, of course, simply because the 'science of Being' can justify no bifurcation among the plural 'possibilities' (the *Seiende*), over which it reigns supreme. This is the obvious message of the *Rektorsrede*. It is also the clear (the milder) instruction of the *Phenomenology*:

We must understand actuality, reality, validity, existentiality, constancy in order to be able to comport ourselves positively toward specifically actual, real, living, existing, constant beings. We must understand being so that we may be able to be given over to a world that is, so that we can exist in it and be our own Dasein itself as a being. We must be able to understand actuality *before* all factual experience of actual beings. This understanding of actuality or of being in the widest sense as over against the experience of beings is in a certain sense *earlier* than the experience of beings.<sup>38</sup>

In this 'plain' sense, philosophy *is* politics as well as science: it provides the noumenal discovery on which politics and science depend (in an ontological sense of priority that goes beyond mere logical priority); and philosophy itself has no other function but to orient us, among the actual entities of politics and science, *to this condition*.

## V

One sees at once the threatening sense in which Heidegger's philosophy risks being utterly vacuous with regard to historical content, historical direction, historical application. Heidegger has no option, therefore: to be relevant, he *must* invoke, however illicitly, *some determinate instruction regarding plural Seiende*. Hence, the extravagant historicized Platonism of the *Rektorsrede* points to a constant *philosophical* need in Heidegger's system, even if (surely) the specifically National Socialist themes are not actually required. There you have the essential thread linking philosophy and politics that runs through all the stages of Heidegger's work.

The lesson is also more than that. It puts *us* on our mettle as well. For Heidegger saw in an unblinkingly clear way that, without the saving fixity of his noumenal prophecies, there could be no way of resisting relativism, historicism, the triumph of technology and social *praxis*, on the essential thesis he himself advanced. That is, once give up the *ontic* canon (ranging, say, from Plato to Husserl), once admit the historicity of philosophy and science and politics, and legitimation in terms of universal invariances becomes utterly impossible. Unless, that is, there is a saving noumenal (ontological) privilege (as Heidegger believed).

In a way, there are two sorts of motivation internal to the series of changes through which Heidegger's philosophy moves. In the one, Heidegger saw that he must give locally convincing evidence of the political pertinence of his otherwise too abstract and seemingly irrelevant metaphysics. In achieving this objective rather brilliantly – in fact, altogether surprisingly – in the *Rektoratsrede* and in his numerous speeches to Nazi student cadres and university-centred audiences, he obviously more than annoyed Ernst Krieck and Alfred Rosenberg.<sup>39</sup> He actually made a serious bid to become the educational *Führer* of the Third Reich. But of course he ultimately failed in this; knew that he had failed, retreated from what he took to be the misguided brand of National Socialism that eventually won out; and so turned, still convinced by his own utopian message, to the peculiar political quietism of the late essays. In the other, he saw that he must give a philosophically cogent account of just how he could claim to have restored philosophy to its original intuition (among the pre-Socratics), to have worked through and to have replaced the classical canon that culminated in the work of Kant and Husserl, and to have secured nevertheless, despite the inconsistencies of time and history, a sense of legitimating universalities, conceptual necessities, essential invariances that escaped the *Weltanschaulich* particularities of mere ontic categories. In achieving that, through the period of *Being and Time* and the *Phenomenology*, Heidegger realized that he must eliminate the central inconsistency of *Dasein*'s role, without disturbing the congruence among his other concepts. The required transition moves from *Entschlossenheit* to *Gelassenheit*: which is to say, from the resolute midwifery of *Dasein* to the initial passivity of *Dasein*'s reception of the prophetic self-disclosures of *Sein*.

The remarkable thing is that both of these lines of development converge in one supreme economical manoeuvre: the *Kehre*. With it, philosophy and politics, as indissolubly intertwined as ever, lead to the pessimism of the imminent victory of technology – which, again, is both philosophically and politically decisive.<sup>40</sup> 'Each epoch of philosophy', Heidegger says,

has its own necessity. We simply have to acknowledge the fact that a

philosophy is the way it is. It is not for us to prefer one to the other, as can be the case with regard to various *Weltanschauungen*.

In this historically *pluralized* ('disclosed') sense, philosophies come to their 'end'. That is, 'The end of philosophy is the place, that place in which the whole of philosophy's history is gathered in its most extreme possibility. End as completion means this gathering.'

'Philosophy [Heidegger holds] is metaphysics', and 'Metaphysics is Platonism'. Heidegger's meaning here is that philosophy *thinks* Being,

the ground . . . from which beings as such are what they are in their becoming, perishing, and persisting as something that can be known, handled, and worked upon. As [that] ground, Being brings beings to their actual presencing . . . the transcendental making possible of the objectivity of objects.<sup>41</sup>

So, *necessities*, in philosophy – a fortiori, in politics – are epochal *and* noumenal. It is for that reason that philosophy does not fall back to Kant's or Hegel's or Husserl's solutions. This is of course also why Heidegger had to eliminate the disturbing role of *Dasein* as it functioned in the earlier phases of his philosophy. It is also why he feels more secure philosophically, why he reaches in a more extreme way politically, why he is ultimately more discouraged in both regards, in writing his last papers regarding the terrible ease with which

philosophy turns into the empirical science of man, of all of what can become for man the experiential object of his technology, the technology by which he establishes himself in the world by working on it in the manifold modes of making and shaping.<sup>42</sup>

If it were possible – but Heidegger doubts that it is, in our epoch: the opportunity has been lost, the utopian vision of National Socialism Heidegger espoused has been denied in Germany itself and overwhelmed by American pragmatism and Russian Bolshevism – 'the [correct] answer [to the question of our epoch] would consist in a *transformation of thinking*, not in a *propositional statement about a matter at stake*'.<sup>43</sup> A 'transformation of thinking', of course, signifies a recovery of the priority of the noumenal inspection of Being.

What we may draw from this is that the force of Heidegger's critical work, as opposed to his peculiar form of Platonist redemption, confirms that, *henceforth*, the constraints on science and political morality are obliged either to conform to what we have previously numbered as Heidegger's arguments (1) and (2) (against certain legitimitative presumptions) as well as to *our* argument (3) against Heidegger's own legitimitative



presumption, or else to counter these same objections effectively. In this, Heidegger certainly leads us to see (against his own intention) the utter bankruptcy of pretending to pull some noumenal legitimation or prescription out of his hat, and the impossibility of securing any legitimation of a strictly universalized sort for either science or politics.

The upshot is breathtakingly simple – but disturbing: if they are eligible at all, second-order legitimative ('transcendental', 'critical', 'pragmatic' or similar) arguments need not be necessary, synthetic a priori, universal or universally presupposed, essential, invariant or anything of the kind; and, they cannot be such if they are cast (as they must be) in ontic, *weltanschaulich*, historicized, praxical or similarly encumbered terms.

So the game has been worth the candle. Heidegger's extravagance, pursued in the extraordinarily tenacious and inventive way he had, closes the door as securely as we are ever likely to be able to do, on the pretensions of *noumenal philosophy*. The short truth is: there is no such philosophy. This is just as true of Jaspers' more appealing and more humane use of the inexhaustibility and/or ineffability of noumenal *Existenz* and transcendence as it is of Heidegger's ultimately anti-humanist recovery of noumena.<sup>44</sup>

## VI

We need, before closing this account, to fix as clearly as possible – for the period after the 'turning' – the final version of Heidegger's preposterous solution of the would-be noumenal direction of science, philosophy, politics, morality and art. The master clue appears at the beginning of the notorious *Letter on Humanism*. It speaks in a quintessentially Heideggerian voice:

We are still far from pondering the essence of action decisively enough. We view action only as causing an effect. . . . But the essence of action is accomplishment. To accomplish means to unfold something into the fullness of its essence, to lead it forth into this fullness – *producere*. Therefore only what already is can really be accomplished. But what 'is' above all is Being. Thinking accomplishes the relation of Being to the essence of man. It does not make or cause the relation. Thinking brings this relation to Being solely as something handed over to it from Being. Such offering consists in the fact that in thinking Being comes to language. Language is the house of Being. In its home man dwells.<sup>45</sup>

This extraordinary opening paragraph must be read as a contorted reinterpretation of *Being and Time*. It very nearly ensorcelles us into

bewildered acquiescence. It zaps us. But it is an enormous conceptual fraud. Notice particularly the analysis of 'accomplishment': 'only what already is can really be accomplished.' What does that really mean? It should by rights mean only that Being, to which we can assign no intelligible structure at all, really *has* no structures – except (negatively and figuratively) as the undifferentiated source of all that *is* (in the pluralized, structured sense in which, as Heidegger also says, 'Being is always the Being of an entity'). But now it means not merely that, but, since '*accomplishment*' (whatever it is) must *be* the prefigured 'essence' of *some* determinate action, also the noumenally determinate form of *that* particular being that *is* phenomenally or ontically effectuated in historical time.

That, now, proves to be utterly incoherent, utterly ruled out, utterly contrary to the corrected Kantian theme Heidegger imposes on Kant's own (reverse) presumption. That is, Kant, read metonymically as the voice of the entire Western canon of philosophy, illegitimately presumes the self-legitimizing powers of ontic discourse: Heidegger's phenomenology exposes the presumption. (There you have the clue to Heidegger's permanent contribution to philosophy and politics.) For his own part, however, Heidegger had, in *Being and Time*, mistakenly read the lesson of the temporality of *Dasein* and the historical contingency of the conceptual analysis of plural beings (the 'ontological' contribution) as (somehow) permitting a determinate destinal interpretation (from that ontological vantage) of the ontically deployed phenomena of any given existentially encountered epoch. Now, correcting the obvious inconsistency of *Dasein's* indissolubly particularized function straddling both 'levels' at once, Heidegger opts for the deeper incoherence of retaining, separately, the ontological dispensation first marked only *within* the constitutively original ontic function of ('factual') *Dasein*. He keeps the discursive intelligibility of the phenomenological intrusion in our lives and destiny, but he no longer bothers to account *for the origination of that intelligibility itself*. There you have the absurdity of the famous *Kehre*: the strange doctrine of intelligibility's or essence's or legibility's or discursible structure's being 'handed over to [human or *Dasein's* thinking] *from* Being'. That last notion should be a purely heuristic device if it is to have any function at all. But, alas, it is intended as a serious form of determinate prophecy from a privileged source.

So the entire mystery of the *Letter*, both in terms of science and politics, is probably meant quite deliberately to obscure the hocus pocus by which, first, a determinate instruction is assigned human life *from* noumenal sources (that require a poet, a sage, a *Führer*, a Hölderlin); and, second, that instruction comes directly *from* Being, is said to be 'brought to' language but not 'made' or 'caused' by *Dasein's* languaging Being (so to say) – by acting as Being's midwife.

The doctrine is more than a little puzzling, you must admit. It is, of course, Heidegger's last mystery. One cannot appreciate the brilliance and slyness of Heidegger's resolution here – its reaffirmation of the unity of philosophy and politics even (or especially) in Germany's defeat, its consistency with the Platonism of the *Rektorsrede* but (now) no longer with the specific instruction of that address: the epoch, you see, has changed! – unless one reads it as a radical rereading of *Being and Time*. Allow it a few more lines, therefore:

Thinking acts in so far as it thinks. Such action is presumably the simplest and at the same time the highest, because it concerns the relation of Being to man. But all working or effecting lies in Being and is directed toward beings. Thinking, in contrast, lets itself be claimed by Being so that it can be the truth of Being. Thinking accomplishes this letting. Thinking is *l'engagement par l'Être pour l'Être*. . . . Thinking is not merely *l'engagement dans l'action* for and by beings, in the sense of the actuality of the present situation. Thinking is *l'engagement* by and for the truth of Being. The history of Being is never past but stands ever before; it sustains and defines every *condition et situation humaine*. In order to learn how to experience the aforementioned essence of thinking purely, and that means at the same time to carry it through, we must free ourselves from the technical interpretation of thinking. . . . Philosophy is hounded by the fear that it loses prestige and validity if it is not a science. Not to be a science is taken as a failing which is equivalent to being unscientific. [But] Being, as the element of thinking, is abandoned by the technical interpretation of thinking.<sup>46</sup>

Now, this *could* have meant no more than what might summarize Heidegger's entire diatribe against the philosophical canon that suicidally restricts itself to ontic resources. If it were merely that, it would simply recover, unaltered – toward the end of his life – the message of Heidegger's earliest productive period. But it must also, now, resolve the philosophical and political inconsistencies Heidegger himself discerned in the interim. The surprising trick is this: *language* is not rightly a human *instrument* at all, it does not belong primarily to *Dasein*. It is 'essentially', after all, 'the *house* of the truth of Being'. In the merely 'technological' view of language, 'language surrenders itself to our mere willing and trafficking as an instrument of domination over beings'.<sup>47</sup> So the choice (according to Heidegger) is the following: either *Dasein* (in effect: the members of human societies) prepares itself to *receive* the 'utterance' of Being's language (whatever that may be supposed to be) or else it employs its own (derivative) natural language (shall we say) to *dominate* *Seiende* (the entities of nature and human societies thereby revealed).

There are no other options; the two are disjunctive, and both are philosophically and politically significant.

Heidegger would have us believe that language *already* belongs (in some sense) to Being; whereas, in *Being and Time*, it is precisely the mediating, symbiotizing function of *Dasein's* unique *relation* to *Sein*. If the latter doctrine were permitted to stand, then language would be inseparable from *Dasein's* mode of functioning; and if that obtained, then language would be tethered to 'subjectivity' – and, thence, to technological domination. Extraordinary! Since, therefore, Heidegger regards the defeat of Germany as the victory of technology (or, better, the victory of the technological philosophy of language and thought that permeated the politics of Germany's enemies), the conception must be corrected *for the future*.

Fortunately, the trick may be turned at a stroke, and in a way that erases (or perhaps merely obscures) the disturbing inconsistency of the earlier period. Merely change the role of *Dasein* in the noumenal/phenomenal equation. That's all. Merely make it out that Being is the supreme *care* of *Dasein* – that in virtue of which man's humanity is realized. Then, man may still be said to be *related* to Being all right – but no longer in that way in which beings are first *constituted* as the entities they are. *There* is the essential equivocation: in *Being and Time*, plural *Seiende* are what they are *only* in virtue of *Dasein's* internal relation to *Sein*; in the *Letter on Humanism* (after the *Kehre*, that is), what *Seiende* are depends only on what Being 'permits' to be 'handed over to [*Dasein*, or to man, or to man's care] from Being'. In the first, both the ontic structure of beings and the ontico-ontological import of *that* structure as well as the essence of *Dasein* are constitutively dependent on *Dasein's* reflexive function: in the second, only the *care* of those matters entails a strong relation between *Dasein* and *Sein*.

So Heidegger speaks of 'the word's primordial belongingness to Being'. 'This relation', he warns, 'remains concealed beneath the dominance of subjectivity that presents itself as the public realm.'<sup>48</sup> So he comes to his final formula, at once superb and preposterous: 'In its essence language is not the utterance of an organism; nor is it the expression of a living thing. . . . Language is the lightning concealing advent of Being itself.' 'This indicates', he explains,

that 'essence' is now being defined from neither *esse essentiae* nor *esse existentiae* [against Sartre, finally] but rather from the ek-static character of *Dasein*. As ek-sisting, man sustains *Da-sein* in that he takes the *Da*, the lightning of Being, into 'care'. But *Da-sein* itself occurs essentially as 'thrown'. It unfolds essentially in the throw of Being as the fateful sending.<sup>49</sup>

What Heidegger accomplishes here – necromantically – is the dethroning of man or *Dasein* as (in the Kantian sense) the *constituting* site of the conceptually legible structures of all that is real. The latter seemed to be the theme (the improved Kantian-like theme) of the *Phenomenology* and *Being and Time*. Now Heidegger replaces it with the theme of man's 'thrownness' (*Geworfenheit*), which signifies his initially completely receptive role with regard to the fulgurating 'utterances' that originate from Being *itself*: 'what is Being? It is It itself', he says. 'Man is the shepherd of Being [not the 'lord of being']': 'he . . . guard[s] the truth of Being, in order that beings might appear in the light of Being as the beings they are.'<sup>50</sup>

This is now offered as a clarification of the crucial passages of *Being and Time* (p. 42 particularly) in which the Being of beings (both of *Dasein* and of other entities) *seemed* to be such only, *constitutively*, in being such *for* *Dasein* (or, such-for-*Dasein*). Now, in the *Kehre* here intended, 'Man is rather "thrown" from Being itself into the truth of Being':<sup>51</sup> he plays no role in the 'constituting' of beings; he is a witness or a shepherd of the way in which they are epochally disclosed from Being itself. What is conceptually monstrous, here, what is incoherent in the strictest sense, is the double claim: first, that the determinate structures of plural beings, discernible (somehow) by human thought and language, can be said to issue meaningfully from a 'source' (Being) that is indiscursible as such; and, second, that those structures are in some sense constituted linguistically but in a way that is utterly alien and prior to any merely human language. Recall Heidegger's formula: 'in thinking Being comes to language. Language is the house of Being. In its home man dwells.' Unbelievably cunning.

So thinking and 'linguaging' are more than human, more than science or philosophy. They are certainly that in virtue of which man 'comes home' to Being.<sup>52</sup> They are that in virtue of which Heidegger eclipses mere humanism (the humanism of Sartre's existentialism, for instance), since such an existentialism 'does not set the *humanitas* of man high enough'. The humanism needed 'thinks the humanity of man from nearness to Being . . . a humanism in which not man but man's historical essence is at stake in its provenance from the truth of Being'.<sup>53</sup>

## VII

All this needs to be said with great care to be believed: to believe that Heidegger did say these things and to understand what he meant by them. It is in their sheer extravagance and desperate arbitrariness that they are defeated. The irony remains, therefore, that, by their self-defeat, we are led to grasp the plausible sense in which philosophy and

politics remain indissolubly linked, the sense in which (therefore) this holds true of Heidegger's work as well, *and* the sense (yet) in which his own philosophy contributes a saving theme that cannot be merely equated with his own fantastic use of it as an aspirant proto-Nazi, as an enthusiastic and visionary Nazi, as a defeated but still prophetic Nazi.

Two final lessons. First of all, the recovery of what deserves to be saved in Heidegger's philosophy radically reduces the importance of a very large part of his own work. The damning themes, at once philosophico-political in the complex Nazi sense we have been labouring to isolate, are surely utterly worthless, except perhaps as warning specimens of how the mind can be derailed. Notice, however, that in dismissing Heidegger's notions of noumenal destiny's descending into the ontic world that is itself contingently formed from a historically similar *alētheia*,<sup>54</sup> we are not dismissing the essential connection between philosophy and politics. On the contrary, the theme is actually enhanced by discerning the outrageous use Heidegger makes of the conceptual bond between the two entailed in his own phenomenological critique of the purely ontic tradition he exposes.

This is precisely the same theme discovered and alternatively formulated in Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Foucault, Derrida and the post-structuralists. It is not similarly formulated in the views of all these thinkers, to be sure; but it remains constant nevertheless. It is simply the implication of acknowledging *the incapacity of any human conceptual scheme to capture the essential, invariant, universal, necessary, or totalized structure of all that is real*: the consequence of that incapacity concerns the contingency, inevitable opportunism and advantage in the distribution of power associated with the spontaneous use of any conceptual scheme or of any social process that would replace any given such scheme by another.

The second lesson is more inclusive than the first. For Heidegger's Nazism is, on his own say-so, a historicized form of Platonism: a body of normatively legitimated disclosures of collective destiny yielded by Being itself. It is, therefore, an extravagant version of an extravagance. It is a *noumenal* pretension. It would be the same whether it was Nazi or not, and it would be illicit for the same reasons. The second lesson, therefore, erases an even wider swath of Heidegger's philosophy than the first; but, once again, with the exception of collecting specimens of how the mind can be derailed.

The trouble is that Western philosophy has, to a greater extent than it would care to admit, actually *been* committed to similar noumenal pretensions embedded in its own 'phenomenal' resources. Indeed, the entire bewitchment that is philosophy is largely occupied with illicitly exceeding the limits of discursive thought, once we admit that there is no cognitive hierarchy to be had. (In Heidegger's terms, after all, it is

factical *Dasein* that discovers that it has 'ontological' resources beyond its 'ontical' ones.)

From this point of view, Heidegger represents one of the clearest appreciations of the peculiarly transient nature of ordinary conceptual schemes. Construe all such resources as 'phenomenal' – addressed to individuated, numbered, plural things (Kantian, in *that* sense; where the 'noumenal' signifies that whereof one cannot speak at all; *not*, of course, the mere concept of the noumenal).

So seen, the lesson is a remarkably simple one: we must reclaim all philosophical problems under the constraint of *never* intruding a noumenal advantage and of admitting, *everywhere*, the horzonal limitation of the phenomenal presence of our world and our understanding of our world, symbiotized in the same apparent history. Heidegger may then prove to have been the last of the great philosophical pretenders who fully grasped this second lesson and still elected to deny it. There *is*, after all, no developed philosophy that has ever had the courage to embrace that very large constraint and still afford a plausible system of great scope and power. That is surely what is needed – and what will be seen to be needed in the next century. But it will not, indeed it could not, deny the ineluctable link between philosophy and politics.

## Notes

1 The first sustained analysis in English is to appear shortly in a book-length study of Heidegger by Tom Rockmore, *On Heidegger's Nazism and Philosophy*, to be published by the University of California Press.

2 The point has been pressed in a telling way by Theodore J. Kisiel, 'The genesis of *Being and Time*', first presented at a meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, Villanova University, Villanova, Pennsylvania, 20 October 1990.

3 See 'The return of morality', an interview between Foucault and Gilles Barbadette and André Scala, in Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977–1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, tr. Alan Sheridan and others (London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1988): 'For me [says Foucault] Heidegger has always been the essential philosopher' (p. 250).

4 See, for instance, J. R. Merquior, *From Prague to Paris* (London: Verso, 1986), chap. 5.

5 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. from 7th edn by John Maquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 19 (in the German pagination).

6 *ibid.*, p. 22; cf. p. 436.

7 *ibid.*, p. 436.

8 *ibid.*, pp. 16–18; in the context of Introduction II.

9 *ibid.*, pp. 19–20.

10 See Martin Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*, tr. Frank A. Capuzzi, in collaboration with H. Glenn Gray and David Farrell Krell, *Basic Writings*, ed.

David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), which offers a rereading of certain relevant passages of *Being and Time* (cf. pp. 216–17 of the *Letter*).

11 *ibid.*, p. 24.

12 *ibid.*, p. 14.

13 Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, tr. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 11.

14 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 12.

15 *ibid.*, p. 4.

16 *ibid.*, pp. 2–4.

17 *ibid.*, p. 9.

18 *ibid.*, p. 5.

19 *ibid.*, p. 9.

20 See Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, tr. Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper & Row, 1965). Lauer joins here two essays of Husserl's: 'Philosophy as rigorous science', which dates from 1911, and 'Philosophy and the crisis of European man', which dates from the 1930s. This is, of course, not to say that Heidegger adheres to Husserl's notion of phenomenology.

21 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 11.

22 See Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, tr. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), §§26–7, for a brief impression of Husserl's view.

23 See, for instance, the carefully balanced effort to recover phenomenology in a temperate way, in J. N. Mohanty, *Transcendental Phenomenology: An Analytic Account* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), chap. 3. Mohanty appears to be in transition to a more radical reading of the bearing of history and relativism on the work of transcendental phenomenology.

24 See, particularly, Victor Farias, *Heidegger and Nazism*, ed. Joseph Margolis and Tom Rockmore; French material tr. Paul Burrell, with the advice of Dominic Di Bernardi; German materials tr. Gabriel R. Ricci (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), Part II.

25 Cited from 'The self-determination of the German University' (the Rectoral Address), by Farias, *ibid.*, pp. 98–9.

26 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 384–5.

27 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B833; see, also, *Kant's Introduction to Logic and His Essay on the Mistaken Subtlety of the Four Figures*, tr. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott (London: Longmans, Green, 1885): §iii, in the *Logic* (p. 15).

28 Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 8.

29 See, for instance, Joseph Rouse, *Knowledge and Power: Toward a Political Philosophy of Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), chap. 4, esp. p. 79; cf. also pp. 60–2.

30 See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 37–8.

31 See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, tr. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); Emmanuel Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, tr. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985).

32 For an overview of this literature, see Joseph Margolis, 'Moral realism and the meaning of life', *Philosophical Forum*, xxii (1990).

33 Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, pp. 5–6.

34 *ibid.*, p. 12.

35 See, for instance, Martin Seliger, *Ideology and Politics* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1976); Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Dialectic of Ideology and*



*Technology: The Origins, Grammar, and Future of Ideology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976). A more conventional view, that is, a view of ideology that features the interests of socio-economic classes and, in that sense, unconscious distortion, is examined in various larger contexts by Kai Nielsen, *Marxism and the Moral Point of View: Morality, Ideology, and Historical Materialism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), chap. 5.

36 Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, pp. 11–12.

37 *ibid.*, p. 12.

38 *ibid.*, p. 11.

39 See Farias, *Heidegger and Nazism*, Part II.

40 See, for instance, Martin Heidegger, 'The question concerning technology' and 'The end of philosophy and the task of thinking', in Krell (ed.), *Basic Writings*.

41 'The end of philosophy and the task of thinking', tr. Joan Stambaugh, pp. 372–5.

42 *ibid.*, p. 176.

43 *ibid.*, p. 373; italics added.

44 See, for instance, Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy*, vol. 2, tr. E. B. Ashton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 162. I have compared the two in an as yet unpublished paper, 'On the responsibility of intellectuals: reflections on Heidegger and Jaspers', first presented in a symposium: 'The idea of the university and the civil society', at a meeting of the Karl Jaspers Society of North America, meeting jointly with the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, Boston, Massachusetts, 28 December 1990.

45 Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*, p. 193.

46 *ibid.*, pp. 193–5. (The essay was first published, in German, in 1947.)

47 *ibid.*, p. 199.

48 *ibid.*, p. 198.

49 *ibid.*, pp. 206–7.

50 *ibid.*, pp. 210, 221.

51 *ibid.*

52 *ibid.*, p. 242.

53 *ibid.*, pp. 210, 222.

54 See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 33; *idem*, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, pp. 215–17; also, Martin Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, tr. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, 1984).

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## The shadow of this thinking

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Dominique Janicaud

### Part I The undiscoverable politics

Le plus grand défaut de la pénétration n'est pas de n'aller point jusqu'au but, c'est de le passer.

– La Rochefoucauld

Whoever relies only on the recent polemics launched by Victor Farias's *Heidegger et le nazisme*<sup>1</sup> will find it extremely difficult not only to weigh fundamental philosophical questions but even to form an idea of Heidegger's thought that is not a caricature. Heaping up unevenly relevant facts and hastily solicited testimonies, the debate runs the risk of limiting itself to expatiate on Heidegger's 'Nazism' and to issue moral condemnations intended to be final. But which Heidegger is being judged? Is it the character who, during the summer of 1933, 'wore knee-length pants'?<sup>2</sup> Or is it the author of the most decisive interpretation of Nietzsche's thought put forth to this day? Farias makes the most out of the first and downplays the second.<sup>3</sup> Made unrecognizable, Heidegger's thought is reduced to a vague pathos of pseudoheroic existentiality, provincial attachment to the *Heimat*, and, especially, a petit-bourgeois reactionary spirit.

The need to reverse this perspective, blurred by sensationalism as well as by the desire to purchase a clean conscience cheaply, is urgent. Critical and responsible minds in the present and the future must start again from what interests them (whether positively or negatively, or both positively and negatively, or even if it is undecidable) in a philosopher whose many books and published lecture notes are – until there is proof to the contrary – the only authentic repositories of his thought. To do

just that with respect to the question of politics is my aim in this paper,<sup>4</sup> without ignoring, however, a serious and perhaps crippling difficulty: a heedful and sustained reading of Heidegger's work does not easily discern in it the question of the political *as such*. Are we then faced with an indeterminable politics? May we even go so far as to contend that there is *no link* between the philosophy of *Being and Time* and Heidegger's political commitment of the years 1933 and 1934? According to this latter view, Heidegger is a fundamentally apolitical thinker. Owing to dramatic historical circumstances, he encountered politics only against his will. Once in the political realm, he ran up against the worst misunderstandings and finally saw his loftiest thoughts disfigured into their grinning opposites. That thesis will be examined first. It will be discussed on the basis of *Being and Time* and then on the basis of a reading of the Rectorial Address.

Even if a connecting thread – no matter how tenuous and even negative – can be discerned between the ontological quest and the political concern ('which deals with public affairs', as the Littré dictionary has it), does it form an 'ontological politics', and, when such a politics ends in failure, does it turn into a denial of politics? These are questions which must make their way through Heidegger's self-critique (which is also a self-reinterpretation) in order to reach the level of a genuinely critical revaluation of the relations between ontology and politics.

### The broken thread

To what extent is the thesis of the absence of a link between the philosophical work prior to 1933 and the commitment of '33 defensible? It seems corroborated by the attacks launched by the Nazi camp. Ernst Krieck, indeed, reproached the author of *Being and Time* with having a philosophy that was incompatible with National Socialism: 'There is nothing in it that speaks of the people and the State, of race and of all the values characterizing our National Socialist worldview.'<sup>5</sup> Pierre Aubenque, who cites these lines, gives an answer that is formally identical, albeit one that is issued from a completely different point of view: '*Being and Time* is obviously an apolitical work.'<sup>6</sup> Given that Heidegger puts forth a 'formal description' of human existence in that book, he does not, according to Aubenque, offer 'any criterion [that would be] of practical use' to form the basis of a politically determinate authenticity. From that, Aubenque concludes that there is no 'essential dependency' between Heidegger's philosophy and his 1933 commitment. He even goes so far as to affirm that 'Heidegger's initial adherence to the "movement" is not a philosophical act.'

This thesis must be examined with the utmost care, for the continuation

of the discussion depends, to a large extent, upon its degree of validity. What argues in its favor is obvious: at no time do either *Being and Time* or the works of the following years present themselves politically. Neither the fundamental project (the reformulation and elaboration of the question of being<sup>8</sup>) nor the unfolding of the enterprise in its different phases (the theme of the analytic of *Dasein*, the distinction among existentials, the critique of everydayness, the disclosure of a new sense of temporality, etc.) lead to any 'program' of political reform or revolution – nor, incidentally, to a conservative one. Not only is Heidegger in dialogue, from beginning to end of *Being and Time*, with metaphysical and not political authors (even if these 'great' representatives of metaphysical thinking, beginning with Plato and Aristotle, also had political philosophies), but, as Pierre Aubenque rightly reminds us, the method is essentially *formal* (the 'formal structure' of the question of being is emphasized as early as subsection 2 of the book). In this respect, Heidegger remains entirely faithful to the demand for neutrality made by the phenomenological *epoché* – this holding true of his analysis of resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*) as well. To these considerations, which in principle are already sufficient, another may be added that points out the fragility, if not the absurdity, of the attempts at an ideological assimilation of *Being and Time* to Nazism. This last position is epitomized by Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt in *Le Monde*: 'Both stylistically and lexically, *Being and Time*, from its second section onwards, is unfortunately quite close to *Mein Kampf*.' This bold comparison, which is not supported by any examples, is more circumscribed than appears at first sight: it is restricted to the second section and abstracts from the content. Duly noted. Nonetheless, even if we keep to the vocabulary, we seek in vain in *Being and Time*, even in its second section, for the *völkisch* phraseology (i.e., the phraseology about the essence of the people) attacking the *Judentum* (Jewry) and the 'Anglo-Saxon plutocracy' on every page of *Mein Kampf*, the whole vulgar arsenal of the frantic propaganda surrounding the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*. In it, neither a *Weltanschauung* nor, still less, propaganda or the party are at stake! Conversely, it is impossible to credit *Mein Kampf* with the concepts that make up the hermeneutic wealth of *Being and Time*, including its second section: think of *Sorge* (care), *Gewissen* (conscience), *Schuld* (guilt), and lastly of the understanding of an ec-static temporality and historicity.<sup>10</sup> Will the excessive character of the comparison be attenuated by Goldschmidt's conceding that 'one cannot judge in French'? This is a curious polemical reversal of the preeminence of German, which was so violently attacked by Farias.<sup>11</sup> Not only were Hitler and Heidegger born the same year, but both spoke German! Would prolonged sessions of oral declamation allow us to grasp as quite close (stylistically?) this sentence penned by Hitler: 'Dass man ein Volk nicht durch Beten freimacht, weiss man

im allgemeinen' (Everyone knows that a people does not free itself by praying)<sup>12</sup> and the following one by Heidegger: 'Das Ziel ist die Ausarbeitung der Seinsfrage überhaupt' (The goal is the elaboration of the question of being)?<sup>13</sup> If abstraction is made from content, by what rule are we expected to carry out these 'comparisons'? Does it suffice to refer to Adorno and his *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit*? Does this not amount to forgetting, to Heidegger's sole detriment, that National Socialism's pseudoauthenticity has retroactively polluted many great German texts in which the vocabulary of *Eigentlichkeit* (authenticity) and even of *Entschlossenheit* (resoluteness) occurs – for example, the writings of Eckhart, Luther, Hölderlin, Nietzsche? Is it not saddening – and contrary to the good cause that one claims to defend – to give Hitler's hate-filled and verbose phraseology the honor of becoming in short, the truth of an ontological discourse to which finally one denies any dignity of its own? The same Goldschmidt has written elsewhere a telling sentence whose gravity perhaps eluded him: 'Heidegger's "thought" is only the shadow of Auschwitz.'<sup>14</sup> We now understand why Goldschmidt confined himself to the style: Heidegger's thought does not exist. Q.E.D.

In a sense, Farias is somewhat more serious (hardly, however, since he devotes only a few of his 305 pages to the philosopher's major work): he envisages 'correspondences' whose thematic content foreruns Heidegger's 'political preferences'.<sup>15</sup> He recognizes that it does not suffice to question the 'destruction' of an objectifiable concept of truth carried out in favor of a prepredicative horizon (in reference to subsection 44).<sup>16</sup> He writes: 'To go further, one would have to exhibit the veritable moments in *Being and Time* that may effectively be considered to be forerunners of Heidegger's subsequent evolution.'<sup>17</sup> Does Farias really do that? On the basis of a sound remark (authenticity is not solipsistic), he directly passes over to considering subsection 74. This enables him to give the impression of being relatively precise, while arrogantly ignoring the quasi totality of a work of which he will state, in conclusion, that it 'positively sets into place properly fascist elements. . . .'<sup>18</sup> What are these elements?

Farias attempts firstly to support the claim that tradition founds authentic existence. He does so with a quotation from subsection 74 of *Being and Time*,<sup>19</sup> on which he does not even comment and which he does not seek to understand, since he claims that 'tradition and heritage' are 'forms of another reality which founds them . . . : namely, the people. . . .'<sup>20</sup> In this, he is completely mistaken: according to Heidegger, tradition is not an 'archetype'. All Farias needed to do was to read the line immediately following the citation in order to note that '[r]ecapitulation is explicit handing down, i.e., going back to the possibilities of the *Dasein* that has been there'.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, recapitulation cannot be 'founded' upon tradition, since it is a mode of resoluteness

(*Entschlossenheit*). The *Dasein* is indeed 'futural in its being' (*in seinem Sein zukünftig*).<sup>22</sup> We have a sentence here that could have embarrassed Farias if he had wondered about Heidegger's innovative understanding of temporality. As he does not care about it nor about its ontological sense, he gets out of trouble by appealing to a 'conservative/revolutionary' scheme: 'In the future, the people must be that which the heroes have represented within the tradition.'<sup>23</sup> According to Farias, recapitulation consists in recovering an identical (ontical) content. Heidegger says the contrary. On his way, Farias further mutilates the text on several essential points. He has the reader believe that the only act constitutive of decision is combat. We read, however: 'Only in communication and in battle does the power of destiny become free.'<sup>24</sup> Communication (*Mitteilung*) has simply been ignored! Must we be reminded to what extent the ontological solidarity expressed by the *Mitsein* (being-with) excludes battle's being the sole constitutive relation with others? That is one of the points over which Sartre had disagreed with Heidegger: 'The essence of relations among consciousnesses is not the *Mitsein*, but conflict.'<sup>25</sup>

Secondly, Farias would have us believe that the agent of decision is directly the community of the people. It is true that Heidegger restates that *Dasein* is 'being-with' and that, for that reason, 'its occurrence is occurrence-with and is determined as *destiny*'.<sup>26</sup> But the subject described in those pages is a Self, existing, free for its death, and taking over its anguished choice (it is by no means dissolved into the community).

Thirdly – this misrepresentation being doubtless the least innocent of the three – whereas Heidegger says that in authentic recapitulation '*Dasein* may choose its heroes',<sup>27</sup> Farias manages, on two occasions, to change this plural to a singular (in one of the two passages, we even encounter the word *Führer*!).<sup>28</sup>

So many distortions in so few pages! If Farias's thesis could be supported, would it not find a precise argumentative basis more easily? Instead, we note that it ends up contradicting itself. Four lines apart, we read that Heidegger's ideal in 1927 is 'a kind of revolutionary-traditionalist communalism' and that his political preferences 'exhibit themselves with complete clarity'.<sup>29</sup> 'A kind of . . .': that is the opposite of a clear model! Moreover, the word 'communalism' is thoroughly inadequate.

To conclude this topic, we note that Farias went from a relatively flexible formulation of his thesis (which solicits the reader's approval) to an unbending conclusion (which tends to put pressure on the reader). According to the first formulation, *Being and Time* presents 'a philosophico-political horizon which . . . included the possibility of the subsequent choice in favor of National Socialism' (among other choices?). According to the second one, the book 'positively sets into place properly fascist elements'.<sup>30</sup> We have just seen that this last thesis treats the text

of *Being and Time* with few scruples. It is more reasonable and more in conformity with the truth to state with George Steiner that no one would have taken it into one's head to look retrospectively for politically suspicious 'traces' on the basis of the sole text of *Being and Time*.<sup>31</sup> In it, we have a book which is philosophically overdetermined and of uncommon hermeneutic wealth. It is the *working drawing* for the structures of ec-sistence. As a matter of fact, over the last sixty years, many readings have been put forth: in France, the success of the Sartrian interpretation has occluded the medical approach (that of the Swiss psychiatrist and longtime friend of Heidegger, Medard Boss) or the theological one (that of Rudolf Bultmann). The resoluteness itself has more often been understood in an Augustinian or a Kierkegaardian sense than in relation to the political situation of the last years of the Weimar Republic. One could also claim (this would not be the most absurd claim, although these are painful examples) that poets such as Trakl and Celan attest to what the resoluteness of poetic existence may be. In any case, the 'political' reading certainly is not the only possible one, and it runs the risk of being particularly unfruitful if it becomes exclusive of other readings.

Having set aside the extreme thesis of a unilaterally political reading of *Being and Time*, must we accept the opposite view, introduced at the outset, which understands the work to be utterly apolitical? If we look at the matter more closely, even Pierre Aubenque does not claim that there is *no link at all* between *Being and Time* and the political commitment of 1933: '*Being and Time* is obviously an apolitical work. This very apolitical character of the book makes it negatively responsible for Heidegger's political commitment, in the sense that it was not able to hold him back.'<sup>32</sup>

We already see in what respect Aubenque is right. Since there is no positive and determinate political philosophy in *Being and Time*, since even the 'few fascist elements' allegedly isolated by Farias manifest themselves as such only at the cost of considerably off-handed simplifications, Heidegger could not have 'derived' his adherence to National Socialism from it. We are, thus, left with the much more likely hypothesis of there being a solely *negative* link between the masterpiece of 1927 and the commitment of 1933. According to this view, Heidegger's enormous error has a philosophical origin *by default* only. It is precisely the absence of a political philosophy – and perhaps even of an ethics – which made him considerably more vulnerable.

The difficulty appearing now is not negligible, however: the absence itself of a *political* philosophy in Heidegger's philosophy has a philosophical significance. This want is not a lack that is external to thought: it is attributable to it. It must therefore be explained in one way or another, but without abstracting from the thought that indeed constitutes the

horizon within which his choice was made (even if nonphilosophical circumstances and motivations were also at play in it). The term 'apolitical' is besmirched, and it is not devoid of ambiguities. If it turns out to be an appropriate qualification for the author of *Being and Time*, it will be so in a philosophical sense that must at all costs be specified.

### **A reconnected thread: the a-politics of *Being and Time***

Our thesis is taking shape: if there is no politics in *Being and Time*, there is an 'a-politics'. This term must be understood in an ontological sense: *Dasein* is *apolis*. Originally, being-there (*Da-sein*) is defined neither as *animal rationale* nor as a political animal (the two go hand in hand in Aristotle). Although Heidegger does not explicitly treat the question of politicization and apoliticism, it is within the logic of his discourse to consider that these attitudes are complementary and susceptible of passing into each other according to circumstances. The 'they' is in the habit of undergoing such reversals. Apoliticism as a lack of differentiation is an attitude that is itself ensnared (*verfallend*), neither appropriated nor taken over. It excludes neither idle talk, nor curiosity, nor ambiguity, all characteristic traits of the 'they'.

To clarify what has been put forth, it must be recalled that the existential analytic aims in the first place at 'destroying' the definition of man as *animal rationale*. After reminding us that 'the person is not a thing, not a substance, not an object',<sup>33</sup> Heidegger proposes a radical critique of both ancient and Christian anthropology. The ancient understanding of man, as *zōon logon echon*, is quite briefly (and expeditiously) criticized, insofar as it strengthens the forgetfulness of being: 'The kind of being of the *zōon*, however, is understood here in the sense of being objectively present and occurring.'<sup>34</sup> The definition of man as a living thing is ontical. As for the *logos*, it constitutes 'a higher endowment whose kind of being remains as obscure as that of the being so pieced together'.<sup>35</sup>

On the one hand, then, there is the forgetfulness of being in its distinctive difference (the ontological difference, i.e., that between being and beings). On the other, there is an obscurity (i.e., a lack of thought) concerning the operative notions. These are the two traits which the existential analytic not only wants to correct but aims at eradicating with its elucidation of the ontico-ontological preeminence of *Dasein*. The existential analytic brings together, under the sign of the ontological difference, the care of existence (which appropriately recovers that which 'animality' concealed) and existence's project of understanding (which thinks very closely what the 'natural' *logos* occluded). Now, if we turn to the beginning of Aristotle's *Politics*, we read that 'man is by nature



a political animal'.<sup>36</sup> The definition of man as 'rational being endowed with speech' cannot be dissociated from his condition as a 'political animal'. Because man can speak, he can 'make known what is beneficial or harmful, and so what is just and unjust'.<sup>37</sup> The utterance emitted within the space of the City allows man to unfold his rational potentialities, his virtues, and to realize the Good toward which he tends by nature. If he claims to elude it by either lack or excess of being, he is 'either a brute or a God'.<sup>38</sup> The chain of relations linking the human to the rational, city-dwelling, and political constitutes the natural metaphysics with which Heidegger takes issue throughout *Being and Time*, down to his deconstruction of the 'vulgar concept' of time.

It is therefore obvious that Heidegger here meets the political question, even though he does not say a word about it. He encounters it only in order to subordinate it to the ontological question. What is henceforth of consequence to the *Dasein* is that which is *daseinsmässig*, that is, truly characteristic of *Dasein*, suited to its fundamental difference. This requirement implies a complete structural-transcendental redistribution aiming at the appropriation of this radical difference. *De facto*, in *Being and Time*, the *Dasein* is thought of as *apolis*, or, in Aristotle's terms, as equally capable of being a brute or a god. The existential analytic takes the measure of the standardlessness of that being.

However, among the possibilities available to the *Dasein*, there is 'initially and for the most part' (an extremely frequent expression in *Being and Time*) that of being with others in the mode of the 'they'. The ontological field defined by falling away from authentic self and falling prey to the 'world',<sup>39</sup> which, according to Heidegger, is all too accessible, does correspond to the dimension (founded in nature) where rationality, speech, and life become articulated within a political community. In other words, the field on which Aristotle builds an economics and a politics and with respect to which Heidegger takes a radical ontological step back is *the same*: it is that of everydayness and *doxa*. But Aristotle is not content with establishing the general conditions of man's existence in a community regulated by the search for the common interest. Basing himself on the (ideal) principle that 'the state is an association of freemen',<sup>40</sup> he undertakes a methodical and structural study of the respective advantages of the three correct constitutions (monarchy, aristocracy, and republic) as well as of the disadvantages of the regimes straying from them (tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy). This investigation is itself guided by a consideration of the just mean (*mesotēs*).

This reminder is not meant to reproach Heidegger with the absence of such analyses in *Being and Time*, for they do not at all constitute the explicit goal of the existential analytic. It enables us, however, to understand that Heidegger's ontological radicalism no longer offers a foundation for a *possible* structural and critical study of forms of sovereignty.

This is so because the everyday social space, shot through as it is with ambiguity, idle talk, and curiosity, is unsuited to becoming the vector of positive ontological determinations. Although Heidegger never acknowledges it, the negative characteristics attributed to the 'they' overlap, at bottom, with the Platonic depreciation of *doxa*. Is not this anonymous, unstable, novelty-seeking existence, the one that was led in the agora, always exposed to the bright and vivid appearances? Far from being able to give occasion to a just (and better) social environment, it seems to secrete nothing but mediocrity.

To this, Heidegger would object that he does not have a *pejorative* conception of the 'they', and that, on the contrary, he recognizes it as an unavoidable structure of existence,<sup>41</sup> the ensnarement (*Verfallen*) being our everyday lot and having to be thought as such. These denials are frequent in *Being and Time*: for example, '[t]he expression "idle talk" will not be used here in a disparaging sense. Terminologically, it means a positive phenomenon which constitutes the mode of being of the understanding and interpretation of everyday *Dasein*.'<sup>42</sup> All the same, the entire motion of the *Dasein* toward appropriated-existence (*Eigentlichkeit*) will go against the grain of the 'they' and will imply its critique (for example, the inability of the 'they' to choose<sup>43</sup>). And it cannot be said that the connotations of 'idle talk' are particularly favorable, since the reciprocity between listening and speaking, which makes an existential out of *Rede* (discourse), is absent from idle talk. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the vocabulary applied to the 'they' is not only unfavorable but often, intentionally or not, *political*: Heidegger speaks of the 'dictatorship' and the 'authoritarian' character of the 'they'.<sup>44</sup>

In *Being and Time*, there is thus an especially negative phenomenology of being-with, which at no point issues in a positive phenomenology of political sociability. The fundamentally ontological turn given by Heidegger to the phenomenological project, as early as subsection 7, reduces the rational, city-dwelling, and political space to the 'they' and only leaves open to the *Dasein* concerned with its possibilities, an a-politics, that is to say, an indeterminate and – as Hegel would say – abstract authentic sociability. The self, which is led toward the most extreme appropriation of its ec-sistence, is called to its own-most, most faithful possibility. Now, the criterion of this appropriation is neither tradition nor a fusion with the people, as Farias claims, but the mineness: 'The two kinds of being of appropriated existence [*Eigentlichkeit*] and unappropriated existence [*Uneigentlichkeit*] – these expressions are terminologically chosen in the strictest sense of the word – are based on the fact that *Dasein* is in general determined by mineness [*Jemeinigkeit*].'<sup>45</sup>

The properly political problem (that of knowing how the ontologically sovereign *Daseins*, albeit always at risk of relapsing into the 'they', are to live together – according to which distribution of authority, which

rules of government, which civil laws, and which economic constraints, etc.) remains entirely open. The subsection devoted to discourse (*Rede*), which connects the immediate existential of attunement and the mediate existential of understanding-interpretation, affords the best sketch of an 'authentic sociability'. In it, we discern that Heidegger seeks a being-with freed from the demands of constant presence, a being-with (*Mitsein*) which – as Sartre had seen – is existentially experienced in the workshop or the sports team.<sup>46</sup> In sharing an activity together, we understand each other without words: dialogue becomes shared in its very suspension.

In this, there is nothing politically determinate. This is attested to by the fact that on the basis of this ontological radicality and this search for authenticity at all cost, the most opposed political attitudes are possible (the Maoist cultural revolution, as well as the fateful choice of 1933), but also nonpolitical attitudes (e.g., the evangelical conversion of Saint Augustine, who inspires Heidegger so much in *Being and Time*, or the most decided exposure to poetic or artistic illumination, as with Hölderlin, Van Gogh, Trakl, or Celan).

Apoliticism often results from indifference. On the contrary, the a-politics of *Being and Time* derives from an exacerbated concern for difference, from the extreme appropriation of *my* mortal condition, which sets me apart from the City's everydayness to leave me only with the poise and self-assurance of others in communication or battle. Such is my condition in quest of the futural temporalization of a beginning.

Did the ontological radicalism of this a-politics contain a danger? Yes, the one to which Heidegger succumbed. This danger may also be characterized as the will to constitute *directly* an authentic, existential-ontological politics, as the will to found a politics anew on the ontological *difference* alone. This amounts to a wager, since the rational, city-dwelling, and political space has literally been deserted, emptied of all its positive determinations (while truth as rigor in adequation, as well as any ethical ideal, have also been deconstructed)! But this desertion or this withdrawal could have been temporary, if Heidegger had not given in to the temptation – perhaps due to the unexpected repercussion of the book – to turn *Being and Time* into the cornerstone of a new radical *foundation* (which amounted to his repeating the metaphysical gesture, while denying that he was doing precisely that).

Curiously, Heidegger did not realize that the Aristotelian rationality which he was then setting aside was not at all that of the *mathēsis universalis* (universally dominating the 'world' and reducing it to a *res extensa*), but rather that of the crafts, a poietic and prudent rationality whose full ontological scope was, however, experienced by Heidegger at the level of handiness (*Zuhandenheit*) and its sleights of hand – a rationality indeed precious in a realm exposed to all manner of errancy, as politics is.

**Part II The last circle**

Denn das Schickliche bestimmt das Geschick und dieses die Geschichte.  
 – Martin Heidegger

From 1945, Heidegger had not simply developed a 'low profile' personal strategy of defense (the theme of the 'six months'); he had above all followed his own intellectual itinerary in a non-repetitive fashion by taking up a distance with regard to what remained 'metaphysical' in *Being and Time* by patiently constructing a second work. It would be reasonable to surmise that the strategy was conceived with a view to protecting this work, unreasonable to reduce the work to a sort of *trompe-l'oeil* of purely circumstantial requirements.

Heidegger always claimed that he gave the priority to thinking, even during his most active engagement (if one takes this claim at its face value, the set-back with the rectorate is due less to impossible compromises than to the pitiless manifestation of a de-stabilization of the thinking itself). We have seen that he claimed that the refusal to publish the *Spiegel* interview during his lifetime was intended to protect his work. We have no reason to doubt the sincerity of this claim. As to its legitimacy, that's another matter. But there can be no doubt that the publication by Heidegger of a self-critical statement concerning the Nazi period (however radical it might have been) would have focused public and academic attention on this question and would have opened a series of intense debates comparable to those we have known recently.

In addition Heidegger – working in the first instance for those 'in the know' – certainly thought that the development and the deepening of his work would throw a retrospective light upon the limits and the presuppositions of the labors and of the positions assumed decades earlier. Here again, it is necessary to draw distinctions. To criticize him in this respect for his 'elitism' or his 'aristocratic stance' (and a fortiori to confuse these with his Nazism) is not in good faith. It amounts to ignoring the specificity of his philosophical work and not permitting him to be zealous (and to be it in his own fashion). A meanness of spirit which can lead to a form of intellectual terrorism. It is infinitely more interesting to determine whether the later works after the famous 'turn' make it possible to disentangle the imbroglio of his historical 'politics'.

We are going to raise the question once again from the standpoint of the Heideggerian interpretation of the history of being by undertaking a critique of his radical 'historicism'. Does the thinking of 'Heidegger II' allow one to raise the principal difficulties supposedly aroused by the

philosophy of 'Heidegger I'? In this regard, Ferry and Renaut are right to put us on our guard: 'Heidegger II' cannot be played off against 'Heidegger I'; the limits common to both have to be thought through. However, if it is going to be fruitful, this line of inquiry should not ignore the fact that a creative enterprise is on the way with 'Heidegger II', which is not to be reduced to a retrospective 'stylization' of the work of 'Heidegger I'. The hermeneutical situation which we are going to confront is therefore still more complicated than was suggested by Habermas, whose critique – let us admit it – deserves a double credit: it puts us on guard against the establishment of an excessively narrow relation between the work and the person and it criticizes the 'essentializing' abstraction which allows 'Heidegger II' to disconnect ontological history from politico-historical events.<sup>47</sup> Habermas' critique itself gets stuck half way: entirely preoccupied in passing judgment on the Heideggerian itinerary in ideological terms it reduces the destinal historicism to a banal and irrational fatalism. Thus one risks losing sight of the fact that Heidegger's defensive system would not have been so effective if it had not been attached to a serious (which does not mean indisputable) philosophical re-interpretation. It is therefore the latter which will not have to be reexamined.

### **Re-tying the knot: the a-political stance *vis-à-vis* history**

It has already been shown that Heidegger's engagement of 1933 plunged him into the imbroglia of a direct ontologization of politics. Did Heidegger really get out of this imbroglia later on? In one sense, the ever-increasing distance adopted with regard to *Being and Time* (and to the 'philosophical complex' that Richardson called 'Heidegger I') is impressive. With the possible exception of Schelling, there is no other example in the history of philosophy of an author taking so great a step back with regard to his major work. To disengage the question of being as such from the limits of the analytic of existence, to make these limits appear as inherent in the metaphysics of subjectivity in the framework of a general reinterpretation of metaphysics as the history of being, to try to find a new way of questioning, a new language which will make it possible to re-turn fundamental questions to their un-thought site and, at the same time, to outline the signs of a 'reference' different from (thought more originary than) that of metaphysics: this immense labor is indeed a prodigious intellectual advance which has no equivalent in the West and which seems to sweep away the petty objections inspired by the political and existential adventures of the years 1933–4. Reproducing this line of argument does not mean hiding behind academic dignity or behind the subtlety and the hermeneutical complexities of this

entire work undertaken since 1935 (the richness of which, especially in the case of the *Beiträge*, has not yet been assessed by the critics). One has to bear in mind that Heidegger has offered a self-interpretation which also institutes a self-criticism while proposing, at the same time, a 'self-defense' or, more exactly, a re-situation or re-distribution of personal destinies based upon a holistic articulation of the relation between the political (or a-political) and the intellectual.

This self-interpretation (an expression due to von Herrmann but taken up again more critically by Pöggeler)<sup>48</sup> is well known and is already itself over-interpreted. The great difficulty here is to stick to the essentials in what concerns the political question. The principal difference apparently characterizing the thinking of the 'second Heidegger' on this question slides, through a seemingly negligible displacement, in an a-political direction, not simply by default but by virtue of a deliberate plan. The meditation upon the history of being (and of Nietzsche's thinking as the last figure in the latter) assigns the field of modern politics to the will to will. But this political field is by no means that of a *polis*. As Hannah Arendt has shown in her own way,<sup>49</sup> it is that of a planetary technology which commands the cycle of production and consumption and which both agglomerates and atomizes society at the same time. Faced with the deployment of this technical apparatus, Heidegger will henceforward maintain the view that there is (fundamentally) nothing to be done except wait for a destinal reversal. The thinker recommends an a-political patience. The 'truth' of the planetary deviation becomes the endurance of thinking, a relinquishment (*Gelassenheit*) which is both too near and too far for any specific commitment.

This explicitly 'a-political' attitude, which has nothing to do with any indifference towards politics or with the 'apolitical' attitude of *Being and Time* is based upon a reinterpretation of the world situation as a function of his reading of the history of metaphysics. Just as metaphysics culminates in cybernetics (in the broadest sense), so 'classical' politics (the deliberate calculation of an equilibrium of forces and powers) yields to a technical formulation of all problems, including political problems. Instead of 'pretending' to influence events (the derisory ambition of the leaders, parties, the media), would it not be better to think about the destinal dimension of this situation, in order to safeguard what still remains possible?

The heart of the debate: a destinal thinking (integral historicity) which separates (from an ontological point of view, henceforward displaced toward the 'event') what does not depend on us (the course of the world) from what does depend on us (thinking). A highly stoical division which is not to be despised but from whose elevated point of view formidable difficulties are overlooked (or avoided).

To put it in a nutshell, here are the difficulties (we will have to

disentangle them later): isn't this all going to lead to – even if it is denied – a new philosophy of history (more negative than positive) whose qualities and defects will have to be assessed as a function of the kind of objection that any philosophy of history encounters today? Does this destinal vision really work out the questions as persistently as it claims? It settles the question of responsibility (human, all too human) with one step, a negative one – or rather in accordance with a putatively authoritative assignment: thinking and everything else. Finally, and above all, does it recognize or does it not rather ignore the status of the political and of politics today?

Major questions which will have to be patiently examined; they will lead us to a *dénouement* which is not that proposed by Heidegger: not an integrally destinal division, but – let us anticipate brutally – the dissolution of the Heideggerian conjunction of appropriation and historicity (or destination). An appropriation open to a destination in suspense? The perspective of this kind of thinking, a thinking referred to the Nazi question, will permit us to apply the retrograde movement of truth, but in a hermeneutical sense: if Heidegger had untied the knot in this way would he not have been able to throw light upon this 'past which won't go away?'<sup>50</sup> But the knot remains tied, the imbroglío has been displaced, loosened – but not untied. It has been tied up again in a (destinal) way which could not but obscure the specific, but vital issue of the status of Nazism and of the sense (or nonsense) of the Extermination. It does not fall to me here to determine whether this obscurantism was, from beginning to end, deliberate. The knot is philosophical in character: the analysis of the texts (including the one which bears upon the 'internal truth and the greatness' of the National Socialist movement) confirms it.

Heidegger did not lack the courage (though perhaps the critical lucidity) to take up so profoundly tangled a thinking. Only on the basis of a debate carried to the very heart of this thinking will it be possible to extract, if not the rationale, at least the motives which lie at the root of the acquiescence, of the non-condemnation, of the silence. Which is why this knot will only be untied, if at all, by a critically rational labor which will set limits to Heidegger's integral historicism.

### Destinal historicalism

This is how the thinking which claims that 'everything is destinal dispensation' (*Alles ist Schickung*)<sup>51</sup> has to be named. Not only is there not for Heidegger any superior instance (theological or normative), history itself is dispensation and destiny (*Geschick*) and before all else this is valid of metaphysics as the history of being. But from the moment being is

understood as the name for presence it no longer functions as the last instance: written in the old form (*Seyn*), then barred, it is finally 'replaced' by a trans-epochal instance, the event. Already, in *Being and Time*, the destruction of the history of ontology led to the understanding of being as time in an ekstastic sense and essentially out of the future. Later, in *Time and Being* for example, temporalization is expressly referred to the fourth dimension of time: the gift itself. We are therefore entirely delivered over or exposed to historicity. This is our lot, our 'thrown being' in its most radical form. And the fact of being exposed to the technical enframing (*Gestell*) is only the ultimate version, provisionally unsurpassable.

Let us dwell on this statement: 'Everything is dispensation'. It bears fully and completely upon being in totality and, from this point of view, it remains metaphysical – in the sense of general metaphysics. Objection: it is no longer a question of *justifying* being in general in the manner of onto-theology. Reply, in the form of a question: but doesn't it lead nevertheless to an inversion (hidden, displaced) of every *foundational* justification, that is, of any theodicy? Consider the first of Leibniz' twenty-four theses which (quite rightly) fascinated Heidegger: *Ratio est in natura cur aliquid existat quam nihil*<sup>52</sup>. As the reverse of this universal ordering principle, the sentence 'everything is dispensation' is a challenge to any unified necessity, one which is expressed as the accommodation of givens which are always singular. Historicity itself becomes the irreducible horizon of all phenomenality. Strange offering without anyone either sending or receiving, secretly related to what is fitting and anticipating an event of appropriation.<sup>53</sup> 'Everything is destinal dispensation' is the hall-mark of Heidegger's fundamental thinking, slipping sometimes into a more circumspect mode of expression (for example, 'destiny tests itself against the destinal'<sup>54</sup>).

Is Heidegger still engaged in an inquiry when he writes: 'everything is dispensation'? He affirms, he pronounces, he confirms; and he closes history down on its finitude, reducing the humanity of man to the latter. Is it the case then that radical historicalism still remains a thinking about destinal dispensation and the event, a thinking which aspires to be definitive? The 'piety of the thinking' makes itself known henceforward on the basis of a network of presuppositions, redistributed admittedly (the possibility of taking stock of metaphysics as such, of distancing oneself from it historically). It was never very different with any great metaphysics, fixing the fundamental presuppositions which determine a possible view of the world (radical scepticism was almost always marginalized, rejected with suspicion and even ridiculed).

If Heidegger's historicalism started out linked up with this metaphysics (which he tries to transform), his calling in question also has to bring with it a calling in question of the presupposition of the completion of



the said metaphysics. Is it going to be necessary to suspend rationality in favor of the historicity of its dispensation, as Heidegger seeks to do? It has just been suggested that Heidegger does not escape altogether from a logic which orients and governs the most authentic metaphysical breakthroughs. Ambivalent praise: for the recognition thus accorded to Heidegger's understanding of metaphysics is not exactly what was claimed by him.

How can historicalism be thought as the metaphysical new deal? According to Heidegger, historicity is referred to a more secret instance, namely the destinal, which is not to be reduced to the inevitability of what comes about. The Heideggerian 'dispensation' is not to be identified with a fatality which strikes you as one might receive a blow on the head without being able to identify its origin. It's a *moira*, an allotment which one discovers as one's own and which one appropriates in order to take over the possibilities and impossibilities which it imposes: a destination which opens up a world. This thinking is already, and quite explicitly presented in *Being and Time*: 'Dasein's fateful destiny in and with its "generation" goes to make up the full authentic historizing of Dasein.'<sup>55</sup> Destiny does not deliver Dasein over to an indiscernible or undecidable dissemination, but to a recuperation of its possible and shared meaning. The epoch, the generation offers a possibility which can become mine (within a community). Probably a Hegelian feature; for it assumes a unity of epochal meaning in world history. But also a supplementary metaphysical feature; for it presupposes that, in addition to the thinking which closes down the meaning of being in totality, there arises a recourse to, a collection of the possible – and all this still within the perspective of world history. That 'repetition' which makes up both the initial and the final theme of *Being and Time* announces perhaps – subject to (and in spite of) the denials, beyond the challenge of the Platonico-Christian, onto-theological element – the re-sumption of the originary in metaphysics, the repetition of the metaphysical foundation. Such is the scope of this 'mimicology' that Lacoue-Labarthe analyzes in *The Fiction of Politics*.<sup>56</sup> a mimicology with regard to which what is at stake is easier to grasp than the game itself (for the latter operates without any more pregnant archetype than the destinal appropriation itself). Destinal historicalism stands therefore in a relation to the unsurpassable element of metaphysics which is both tense and extremely intimate. Its destiny is still metaphysical but as though it were turned back against what made up its dominant development, glimpsing an origin which is still to come – and which is perhaps mythical.

To be sure, this historicalism no longer has anything to do with a simple historicism. On the one hand, because it arises out of an ontological (and, it is now evident, also metaphysical) concern which is in no way ontic, anecdotal or historiographical. On the other hand, because it

is sufficiently well advised to avoid any imprudent projection upon the future other than that which results from its fundamental presupposition (the anticipation of a destinal turning). As for the philosophy of history, it is excluded in the classical sense; and Heidegger does everything he can to avoid its return, even in the apparent guise of a reappearance. However, from the moment when his vision of history is set out in accordance with the referential axis of the history of being, from the moment when the latter is understood as a function of a fundamental thinking which, as we have seen, affirms the definitively destinal character of being, it is not itself able to escape this destiny. And then it is taken over by what has been called elsewhere 'rationality as allotment'<sup>57</sup> with regard to which it has not been adequately emphasized that it enforces a suspension of all historicalist dogmaticism.

What one now has to try to understand better is the internal articulation of this destinal historicity and the point from which it becomes excessive. A reexamination of the 'explanation' with reference to Nietzsche will help us. In the case of a thinking which exposes itself to the errant (*Irre*), the political danger is not the only one – even if it is the most salient. Ceaselessly, thinking is exposed to the possibility of finding itself on a path which leads nowhere (*a Holzweg*), a risk which must not be allowed to paralyze the spirit of the research. The 'turn' allowed Heidegger to achieve an intellectual attitude which is nonactivist, non-voluntarist and which excludes any engagement comparable to that of 1933. In this regard, the thinking of 'Heidegger II' relaxes the imbroglio of a politics which is directly ontological. But a thinking which is henceforward both responsive and anticipatory is still just as defenseless against the possible articulation of public life and its rational determinations. Since the circle of an integral historicity has not been broken, its exclusive presupposition prevents it from operating a dia-critical disjunction with respect to the permanent requirements of rationality.

### The 'historicalist singularity'

Once again in 1942, Heidegger raises National Socialism to this literally fatal height while severely attacking its ideological catch-all.<sup>58</sup> It is evident that in purely representative (in the Hegelian sense) terms it is very difficult to understand the almost schizophrenic juxtaposition of recognition and condemnation, allegiance and reserve; what is more, a chronological reading will allow us to discern a clear change of tone between the writings of 1933–5 and those which come later than 1936, in particular, the *Beiträge*: from enthusiasm to disillusionment, from mobilization to critical analysis. Even the 1942 lecture course on Hölderlin ends in the most questioning fashion (and no longer with a call to action): 'Are

there any norms left on earth?'<sup>59</sup> But we still have to interpret this radical modification. Let us agree that it has nothing to do with a rejection, in the sense in which we might have wished to see such a rejection emerge. 'The moral indignation of those who still do not know the facts is often turned against the arbitrariness and the dominating pretension of the Guides – the most fatal form of that appreciation which continues to be offered them'.<sup>60</sup>

Let us leave Heidegger with the responsibility for this declaration and simply apply the interpretative network which he offers us himself. Instead of limiting ourselves to diagnosing an ever more antagonistic attitude within the regime, which makes sense only within the limits of the most well-worn political categories, let us take a more radical approach and watch his dis-discovery of the epochal essence of the will to power, interpreted as the culmination of metaphysics. Dis-discovery which covers – if it does not recover – at least three semantic fields: metaphysics as such, the internal logic of the philosophy of Nietzsche and the historical conjuncture which singularizes Germany. It was not at all evident that these three fields would overlap, and at this point; with the lapse of time (this is a lesson to remember) it is becoming clear that it was and still remains extremely hazardous to decide, on the spot, that this event (or series of events) was destinal. Otherwise expressed, it is not illegitimate in itself to account for a conjuncture on the basis of a philosophy and the latter on the basis of the essence of metaphysics; this methodological approach stands to the credit of Heidegger. But what is difficult to accept (an extreme audacious and questionable gesture) is the short-circuiting of these three fields, and in such a way that metaphysical depth is impeded by the conjuncture at least as much as it illuminates it. Strange reversal of the historical which does not escape the historicist caricature, in spite of everything: to interpret the defeat of France in 1940 in the terms cited above is full-blown 'fatalism'; and if there is then a resurgence of Hegelianism, it is hardly the best aspects of the latter which survive.

But however critical one is tempted to be with regard to this destinal historicity, it has to be admitted that the fundamental feature of the Heideggerian evolution during the years 1935–45 becomes clear: the Nietzschean system with its five interconnecting fundamental terms (will to power, nihilism, eternal return, overman, justice) is the metaphysical motor (or the 'truth') of that active nihilism which finds expression in Germany in National Socialism. In this regard, the Nazi will to power cannot be distinguished – unless it is by virtue of its 'sincerity' – from the other forms (Americanism, Communism) across which the 'machinations' of the universal struggle for power are deployed. Therefore, a correspondence with the ultra-modern (and not the post-modern as Ferry and Renaut think): such is the dominant face of the Germanic fate. Let

us take a look at what Heidegger thought Germany was entitled to in 1934–5: 'the acquisitive power, the preparation and planification of different domains, and calculation, a readiness to deploy "organization"'.<sup>61</sup> This corresponds well to the efficacy of that active nihilism that Heidegger considers inevitable.

On this basis one can understand the disappearance of enthusiasm from 1936–7, the contrary impact of distress – if not of despair (in 'Overcoming metaphysics'), for, according to Hölderlin:

Nothing is more hateful  
To a ruminative God  
Than an untimely growth.<sup>62</sup>

The theme of waiting for God makes its appearance in the *Beiträge*: a waiting to which the rest of his work assigns no end. The National Socialist 'possibility' is diminished until it is no more than an empty form on the horizon. There remains an anterior future or rather an unreal conditionality of the past. But Heidegger will refuse to settle whether it is still too much to admit.

One sees to what an extent the 1942 allusion to the 'historicalist singularity' of National Socialism is a significant key. In its structure, the development of the lecture on the 'Ister' reproduces the rhetorical and intellectual bifurcation of the declaration of 1935 on 'the internal truth and the greatness' of the National Socialist movement. There is a pretence of adopting a point of view above any open and banal political commitments. And it is precisely this 'lordly' tone together with its anti-ideological bent which prevents one from according – without further ado – a stamp of approval to the interpretation which results from this retrospective justification: opposition to Nazi ideology. On the one hand because if the latter is not purely theoretical, the 'movement' is even less monolithic; on the other hand, for the following, much more fundamental, reason: if the importance of the 'movement' is recognized – nobody would wish to deny it – the latter is only comprehensible on the basis of a thematic core closely linked to the thinking of Heidegger (the destinal significance of Hölderlin, in constant tension with the reinterpretation of efficacy). So it is Heidegger himself who obliges us to track back to this theme and to investigate it at a level where ideologies and opinions are circumvented, surpassed, but where more subtle elective affinities nevertheless make their appearance under the cover of a veritable law of history: 'The law of history situates historical man in such a way that what is fitting is furthest removed and the way to the most fitting is the longest and most difficult way.'<sup>63</sup>

**Nietzsche: discord without *dénouement***

One of the most remarkable paradoxes of the Heideggerian reinterpretation of Western history as the history of being is that – while pretending not to be Hegelian (since it no longer recognizes anything like a transcendent rational necessity) – it finishes up in fact by admitting a necessity (if not a destinal ‘inevitability’) at least as implacable as the judgment of the tribunal of universal Reason. Nietzsche serves here as a counter-attack against Hegel but in a way which is never either simple or innocent or devoid of solicitations. To attempt to storm the gigantomania Heidegger–Nietzsche in a few pages is to assume a risk. Explaining Heidegger by way of his ‘most intimate adversary’ is complicated; it calls for – from 1935 to the 1950s – interpretative variations and levels which we cannot analyze here.<sup>64</sup>

In his ‘Letter to the Rectorate of the University of Freiburg’ (1945), Heidegger writes:

From 1936, I undertook a series of lectures and conferences on Nietzsche, continued up to 1945, which constitute both an attempt to come to terms with [*Auseinandersetzung*] Nietzsche and a spiritual resistance. In truth, it would be wrong to associate Nietzsche with National Socialism, an assimilation which, regardless of anything more fundamental, is already forbidden by his hostility to anti-semitism and his positive attitude towards Russia. But, at a higher level, the debate over Nietzsche’s metaphysics is a debate over nihilism, inasmuch as it makes itself known ever more clearly in the form of a politics of fascism.<sup>65</sup>

This declaration should be taken very seriously. It is based on a number of incontestable facts and is to be located at the very center of the debate which interests us here, by linking indissolubly this debate with Nietzsche and his ‘resistance’ towards National Socialism. It is impossible to understand fully the extraordinary attention given to Nietzsche by Heidegger outside the political context of the years 1935–6 on. How would it have been possible to ignore the shameless utilization of Nietzsche by the Nazi regime, his elevation to the rank of official master thinker, but at the cost of innumerable deletions of his texts and of gross schematizations? From an external standpoint, giving lectures on Nietzsche could not but be well viewed by the authorities (in this respect, Heidegger is without ‘merit’); but it is evident that the content of Heidegger’s lectures marks them off radically from the ideological speeches of the time, not simply by virtue of his knowledge of the texts but by his refusal to resort to the new ‘values’, to biologicalism and to the activism of the will to power. That there is a ‘spiritual resistance’ to Nazi ideology

is indisputable. The purely metaphysical reading of Nietzsche's work – done so systematically and so sublimely – attest to a radical break and even a contempt for the short-sighted exploitation of Nietzsche for propaganda purposes and for 'promotion'. So what Heidegger has to say on this subject in 1945 is not altogether off the mark. However, the very date of his declaration should draw our attention to the fact that he is undoubtedly engaged in self-justification. In fact, Heidegger never associated fascism with nihilism as closely as in this text written under the constraint of a procedure of 'de-nazification'. The allusions to what is going on at the time of the lectures held during this period (which, for the most part, have only been made known quite recently) hardly reveal any resistance on the part of Heidegger to the regime.

What is in question here is not that Nietzsche's thought is interpreted as metaphysics and that it is thought to revolve around the tension between the will to power and eternal return, playing respectively the roles of the *essentia* and the *existentia* (this Heideggerian option has already been heatedly discussed and remains one of the controversies of present-day philosophy), it is the historical status of this metaphysics (a status condensed into the following phrase: 'the history of being is being itself and nothing but the latter'<sup>66</sup>). He could have contented himself with thinking about the modernity of Nietzsche – which would not have been a small task. He goes much, much further. He makes of Nietzsche the thinker of nihilism, that is, of the metaphysics which is on the way in an age which devalues the supersensible by inverting it. The historical role of 'Nietzsche's thought' is only intelligible within the schema of the history of being as the destiny of Platonism (a schema which implies that 'metaphysics' possesses a unity, that this unity is ontological and that it is ushered in by 'Platonism'). The expression 'historical role' is too feeble to characterize the direct and integral historicalization of metaphysics. An interpretative frame which presupposes in advance the juncture of being and historicity or better still: that being is itself fundamentally historicity (the hermeneutical breakthrough of *Being and Time* is then wholly integrated within the hermeneutical horizon of Nietzsche). 'What is, is what comes about' Heidegger insinuates at the end of the most audacious and the most disconcerting chapter of the second volume of his Nietzsche.<sup>67</sup> But he adds immediately thereafter: 'What comes about has already come about'.<sup>68</sup> An apparently negligible nuance which confronts us with a sort of ontological *fait accompli* (which, from the first, goes beyond the facts). What has already come about, not in the sense of a purely chronological anteriority but in the sense of a freedom of the possible, is the metaphysical revelation of being as the presence of the present, reoriented (in the modern version) as the unconditional domination of subjectivity (since Descartes).

If it is true that no 'external' necessity has ever been attributed to the

thinking of Nietzsche, then its degree of necessity has not been determined. But this thinking has been integrated (as a function of its internal structure) at the very heart of the schema for the historicalization of metaphysics – towards which we find ourselves carried along by this inescapable ‘fact’: we are the descendants of both Platonism and its modern Cartesian reorientation. It is not surprising that a destinal thinking does not arise on the basis of principles but radically subverts every principle by coming about (or by affirming what has come about through it). What Heidegger imposes as ‘self-evident’ is more than just one inheritance among others but assumes the form of what he calls the unconditional domination (*Herrschaft*) of the metaphysics of subjectivity (up to Nietzsche). The continually surprising feature of these pages lies in the *mélange*, in Heidegger, of an extremely lucid consciousness of the difficulties of his procedure (which cannot dispense with the ‘clubs and the crutches’ of metaphysics)<sup>69</sup> with a disingenuous intrepidity which sweeps away all obstacles with a view to imposing a new language – precisely that of the *Notwendigkeit* of nihilism.

*Notwendigkeit*: necessity. Are we going to allow ourselves to be held up by translational preliminaries, the impatient reader might object, exasperated by the Heideggerian procedure, which consists in substituting attention to an etymology or to a linguistic peculiarity for the reasoned resolution of an a priori? Since every objection has to be translated back into Heideggerian ‘language’, it surely thereby loses its edge and even its legitimacy. Let us try to reduce this kind of preliminary to the minimum by paying attention to the wordplay (which Klossowski fails to appreciate) as between *das Un-ablässige* (the necessary in the sense of that which does not let go of us) and *das Brauchende* (the necessary in the sense of someone ‘who is in need’).<sup>70</sup> Being necessitates in a sense which is both dual and unique because it is at one and the same time both imperiously inevitable and (in silent neediness) the manager of *our* being. Being imposes and awaits; constrains and accommodates. Its countenance is imperious: the domination of metaphysics as nihilism; its face reserved: the accommodation of neediness (*Not*) by a thinking which outlines metaphysics’ step back.<sup>71</sup>

The Janus face of historical being? Such a reference is hardly satisfying, for the ‘economy’ of the two aspects is neither symmetrical nor complementary but the play of one and the same step back. If the latter is mystified, being is taken for nothing by the ‘dictatorship’ of the will to will being. If the step back of being appears as such, then its neediness makes itself known, our neediness (and the secret need for the absence of need). What separates active nihilism from the thinking which ‘overcomes’, appears highly fragile. It is this moving limit which Ernst Jünger names ‘the line’ and to which Heidegger devotes a well-known text.<sup>72</sup>

Several lessons can be drawn from the rereading of the end of chapter

VII of Nietzsche,<sup>73</sup> lessons which bear on the status of Heidegger's language, its political 'results' and finally, the ultimate consequence of destinal historicity.

Nietzsche himself? Let us admit that he disappears completely here in favor of his extraordinary metaphysico-historical elevation as thinker of the will to power and prophet of the Overman (interpreted by Heidegger as Man dedicated to a total mobilization for the mastery of the earth: technician-worker-soldier). His historicalist 'placing in perspective' reduces the ambiguities in favor of the destinal meaning. To the thrusts of the Nazi ideologues Heidegger replies with an infinitely more subtle thrust: instead of refuting the thinking on the basis of values he brings to light both the historicalist necessity and its limitation; the 'un-thought' of Nietzsche eliminates many of the moves intrinsic to his thinking. With Nietzsche, discord becomes the very Discord of the nihilistic age. Is this an exacerbation of the will to power or simply an historical turning point?

Heideggerian discourse becomes stranger still. From the shelter of the authority of his chair he presents a monumental interpretation of the most celebrated philosopher of the Nazi regime. But this discourse is doubly odd. It comprises a continual critique of official ideology and it is presented in a language which becomes ever more personal and even esoteric – and which nevertheless claims to be the truth, the unveiling of what comes about through the history of the twentieth century. A discourse which is both irrelevant (by virtue of its extreme elevation) and extremely relevant (by virtue of a continual 'diagnosis' referring to the world situation). A discourse which purports to be beyond both pessimism and optimism but which claims not to entertain any illusions, exposed as it is to an almost apocalyptic suffering. 'Unlimited and measureless suffering openly, though tacitly, announce a universal situation overflowing with distress'.<sup>74</sup> Terrible words about which one has to ask how they could have been pronounced in a lecture, that is, in public.

The political consequences are considerable. But they can in no way be deduced from political requirements proper to politics considered as an autonomous sphere. Politics, in Heidegger's eyes, is entirely delivered over to technique (itself determined by the essence of nihilism). The *polis* in the Greek sense has become impossible precisely because the city can no longer be for us a habitation, even a questionable habitation.<sup>75</sup> Henceforward, politics is withdrawn from all questioning and no longer offers any recourse since it has been handed over to a total calculability for the domination of the earth (no matter what the constitution of the regime officially in place).

Let us go over the evidence. Destinal historicity leads Heidegger to a purely epochal interpretation of Nazism. This does not come down to saying that everything is necessary but that the fundamental feature of



the epoch is its inevitability. Destiny which, for Hegel, was only the still indecipherable constraint of rational necessity<sup>76</sup> only refers here to the 'closure' of being. It is not less brutal but, on the contrary, still more insufferable, no longer subjected to any higher resolution, implacably exposed to the retreat of being, awaiting protection.

More precisely, this destinal historicalism leads Heidegger well beyond the illusions of 1933–4 concerning a direct and immediate revolution, well beyond his voluntarism and his relative 'activism', also beyond his faith in Hölderlin, at least to the extent that for several years he had been perceived as truly capable of touching the people. Heidegger does not seem to entertain any further illusions about the possibility for Germany of escaping the planetary destiny. One should also not hide the other side of this point of view. On the historical field, nothing is fundamentally opposed to active nihilism nor can it be opposed by anything. It is henceforward evident (which confirms from within the declaration of 1945) that Nazism is understood as a form (doubtless the most bare-faced) of this active nihilism.<sup>77</sup> Even if Heidegger's whole intellectual effort consists in differentiating another intellectual horizon, nevertheless his practical stance takes on (and has effectively taken on) the appearance of a fatalistic acceptance of the ineluctable. 'Historical Man' has no other way out but to experience the danger and the suffering, to go in a certain sense ahead of the retreat of being and so to pave the way for a reception (of this retreat) which will not be nihilistic.

The gravest consequence of this destinal historicity proves to be the ontological justification of this active nihilism, including thereunder the reduction of *ratio* to *animalitas* – to which we shall return later. By justification, we do not mean primarily a personal allegiance nor a subjective approbation but this form – quite peculiar to Heidegger – of a posteriori assignment of necessity to Western history reinterpreted on the basis of its metaphysical axis. It's a justification in the sense of a recognition of justice (*die Gerechtigkeit*), a theme which, with Nietzsche, is supposed to set its stamp upon the institution of the will to power as transvaluation (inverted subjectivity).<sup>78</sup> The more one raises the question to what an extent this feature can determine the interpretation of the West today, the more disputable it becomes – to say the least – to include an historically extremely localized characteristic in a comprehensive historical schema (whose necessity has been presupposed) – biologism, racism – which thereby also acquires *de facto* a historical status. Read these lines from *Holzwege*, lines which remain totally enigmatic if one does not insert them into the frame of that destinal historicity which Heidegger puts in place:

Man as the reasonable being of the age of enlightenment is no less a subject than the Man who conceives of himself as a nation, who

cultivates his racial being and finally who increases his power to become master of the planet.<sup>79</sup>

Far from being approved, these different 'fundamental positions' of subjectivity are certainly heavily criticized. But, in spite of everything, racism is assigned the 'fundamental position' and slides to the center of a process which is regarded as world-historical and in consequence, inevitable – and into a proximity with such notions as 'people' and 'nation' as does not seem accidental. If the reign of subjectivity is unconditional it is evident that it no longer spares Nazism. On this point the Heideggerian critique is penetrating. But what is less so is the dissolution of the specificity of Nazism into an active nihilism (common to the technical era) and, at the same time, the attribution of a decisively planetary dimension to the biological conditioning.

The Man who has become the rational animal, which means today the one who works, can do no more than wander across the deserts of the ravaged earth. . . . The total liberation of the Under-man goes along with the full power accorded to the Overman. Animal impulse and human reason become identical.<sup>80</sup>

Certainly one can lay stress upon the fact that, in this way, Heidegger is trying to think the metaphysical presupposition of conditionings and of threats which surpass the problem of racism and which, more recently, Foucault has for his part identified under the name of 'bio-power'; but the generality of Heidegger's proposal is such that, adjoined to destinal historicity, it lends itself to this 'factualism' which Nietzsche made fun of with reference to the Hegelians:

Take a look at the religion of historical power. Watch these priests of the mythology of ideas and their scorched knees! Can't you see the virtues themselves marching along behind this new belief? Is it really an act of abnegation when historical Man lets himself be levelled down to the status of an objective mirror? What magnanimity – to renounce all the powers of heaven and earth because, in all these powers, one adores power in itself [*die Gewalt an sich*]<sup>81</sup>

Even if these lines cannot be applied *as is* to Heidegger they nevertheless retain a corrosive force – and this for two reasons. First, because it is pertinent to recall the strangeness of an interpretation which employs Nietzsche to recover *one* necessity (even a posteriori) in history, an idea foreign to Nietzsche for whom life defies all necessity. Then, because in Heidegger's own conception of metaphysical domination there is certainly a 'power in itself', to the extent that something religious survives – or

so it seems – in the thought that being, of its own accord, harbors a shelter or safeguard. The power of being, the power of God in history: almost substitutable terms. Being is almost substantialized, accorded a quasi-reflectivity. A Nietzschean critique is undertaken to put into effect a historical schema which, in the name of being, endorses as necessary what is not known to be so in reality (but which one hopes is so, to avoid critical questioning?). A historical schema which, by denying to Man the least hold upon the fatal course of things, forbids all *effective* resistance.<sup>82</sup>

### Critical epilogue

What is most fundamentally susceptible to criticism is not the accent placed upon historicity but its exclusive and unconditioned character, which leads correlatively to a conception of planetary nihilism which is too global. This extremism concerning nihilism (then technology) constrains Heidegger to think of totalitarianism as inevitable, as the political system which corresponds to the essence of technology and which – at the very least – responds most directly to its requirements for command, production and control. This slip explains the error of judgment regarding Nazism but should not be understood uniquely on the basis of the latter. For it is implicated in any determinate and positive approach to the rationality (always relative) of political phenomena. The philosophical root of this decisive suspicion is the direct and exclusive juncture of being with historical deviation, in the form in which he articulates it – most evidently in the ‘Saying of Anaximander’ where the recollection of the closure (and withdrawal) of being into beings (a theme which is only intelligible on the basis of a rereading of *The Essence of Truth*)<sup>83</sup> leads abruptly to a thinking about history which is essentialist and ontological. Heidegger goes as far as to write: ‘Error is the essential domain of history’.<sup>84</sup> This statement is on the face of it absurd. However, *Irrtum*, anterior to the subject, does not strictly speaking mean error but more fundamentally – a hardly translatable word-play – the reign of the errant. Heidegger will explain, immediately afterwards, that this *Irrtum* is the epoch understood as an epoch of being, that is, the enlightening reservation of the latter. ‘Every epoch of world history is an errant epoch’. A later indication situates this deviance within the horizon of time. Historical deviance is ‘ek-static’, conceived in the image of what is essential in temporality.

It is not difficult to formulate a critique of a thinking about originary time which goes directly over into a philosophy of history. Our objection here aims to catch Heidegger at that minimal but decisive turning point where a transcendental meditation upon the essence of truth passes over

into an essential determination of history. We find here an intellectual audacity, a *tour de force*, which has no equivalent in the history of the West. One should be as cautious about this conjunction of being and history as about the Hegelian correspondence of Spirit and history. The one arises on the basis of the withdrawal of being, the other as a function of the development of rationality. In both cases, significantly, we find an appeal – oblique or frontal – to necessity. From the standpoint of rationality, it attributes a meaning to history. From a destinal standpoint, it imposes a constraint and exerts an enigmatic attraction.<sup>85</sup>

This *tour de force* of destinal historicalism is not to be found in this text alone. With a view to a systematic recuperation of its various occurrences, let us quote two more notable examples. In his book *Schelling, Being and Time* is said to put into effect a turn in being itself,<sup>86</sup> in the remark added in 1954 to *On the Essence of Truth*, Heidegger's 'turn' is presented as 'the dictum of a turn at the heart of the history of being'.<sup>87</sup> Being, history of being, (ontological) history of the world, these terms are not equivalent but they do authorize certain tendencies and are perhaps the sign of so many preparations for a destinal historicalism as the new (and negative) philosophy – of history. In this regard Hans Jonas is perhaps right when he says that the second Heidegger, with his metaphorical conception of being, abandons any strict respect for the ontological difference (the sense of being in the infinitive, it should be added).<sup>88</sup> Such a perspective would call for a critical rereading of the 'turn' which would bring out the fact that the recoil of the *Schritt zurück* should not mask what is not only not in question but is on the contrary continually recovered by the second Heidegger: what authorizes thinking to pass from the transcendental plane to that of the worldly historical? What price must be paid for this veritable transgression of finitude? What kind of pretension does it arouse despite the apparent modesty of its 'remission' of metaphysics? So many question which our own itinerary has already covered but which will have to be taken up again.

For the time being it is enough to note that the Heideggerian recoil was not so radical as to represent an 'auto-critique' of his earlier ontologization of politics, then his destinal historicalism. Historicalism paralyzes political rationality, just as it suspends rationality in general. By becoming exclusive, historicalism neutralizes both the political field and rational possibility. It gets stuck between the a-political and the 'a-rational'. Heidegger, so lucid in other respects, only confirmed the internal limitation of his thinking, this intimate commitment to finitude contained in his destinal historicalism. One should not overlook the exceptional density of this obscure circle where being presupposes its historicity, its collectively assumed temporality. This secret habitation is certainly the ek-static character of time, a character which Heidegger hopes to recover in the epochal.

But it is one thing to plunge to the very heart of time, quite another to pursue an irrepressible determination to unify the intellect with the real – even if only on the basis of the hypothesis of the retreat of being. Can one have one without the other? Can what sets Heidegger apart from metaphysics (even from within his Nietzsche interpretation) be suspended? Metaphysics does not let go of its own as easily as this, especially if, as is the case with Heidegger, one is neither content to deconstruct it, nor yet capable of ever surmounting it. Certainly, ‘no one can leap over his own shadow’.<sup>89</sup>

Part I translated by Pierre Adler and Part II by Christopher Macann

## Notes

1 Victor Farias, *Heidegger et le nazisme*, tr. M. Benarroch and J.-B. Grasset (Lagrasse: Verdier, 1987).

2 *ibid.*, p. 153.

3 Not a word about Heidegger’s interpretation of Nietzsche in Farias’s book! This is an enormous and scandalous gap, among other ones, which are no less deplorable – e.g., four very quick pages (pp. 72–6) are devoted to *Being and Time*, and two miserable ones (pp. 282–4) to Hölderlin.

4 This paper is part of a more encompassing critique that will be the subject of my forthcoming book.

5 Guido Schneeberger, ed., *Nachlese zu Heidegger: Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Denken* (Berne: privately printed, 1962), p. 225.

6 Pierre Aubenque, ‘Encore Heidegger et le nazisme’, *Le débat* 48 (1988): 118.

7 *ibid.*, p. 119.

8 Translator’s note: To designate the ontological difference, I keep to the following rule of translation: being = *être* = *Sein*; beings, what is = *étant*, *ce qui est* = *das Seiende*.

9 Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt, ‘Heidegger: l’allemand et le ressentiment’, *Le Monde*, Jan. 13, 1988, p. 2.

10 Translator’s note: Henceforth, all translations of *Being and Time*’s highly distinctive lexicon, as well as of all quotations from that work, are taken from Joan Stambaugh’s unpublished translation of the book, except where Janicaud’s text necessitates an alternative translation.

11 See, e.g., Farias, *Heidegger*, p. 303.

12 Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich: 1938), 2: 777.

13 Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 15th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1979), p. 436.

14 Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt, *La quinzaine littéraire*, November, 1987.

15 Farias, *Heidegger*, pp. 75–6: ‘Thus in the context of the problems raised in *Being and Time* – namely, of ontological concerns – Heidegger’s political preferences become quite visible, and show themselves to be tied to a general model of political society: Heidegger relies on citations from Count Yorck von Wartenburg and asserts that any explanation of historicity will have to conform to his doctrine and to that of Dilthey’ (subsection 76).

16 See *ibid.*, p. 73: ‘Karl Löwith and Ernst Tugendhat have rightly observed

that Heidegger's connection to National Socialism would not have been possible outside a conception of truth already stated in *Being and Time*. By making the questioning about being the prepredicative horizon within which the "disclosing" of what is takes place [subsections 7 and 44], he removes from reflection any possibility of finding verifiable or falsifiable criteria of judgment at the level of an effectively realizable intersubjective rationality. . . . However, it seems to us that something is lacking here: albeit exact, these remarks do not allow one to grasp the properly positive aspect of Heidegger's positions around 1933.'

17 *ibid.*, p. 73.

18 *ibid.*, p. 76.

19 See *ibid.*, p. 74. The text quoted by Farias is as follows (*Sein und Zeit*, p. 385): 'It is not necessary that resoluteness *explicitly* knows of the origin of its possibilities upon which it projects itself. However, in the temporality of *Dasein*, and only in it, lies the possibility of fetching the existentiell potentiality of being upon which it projects itself *explicitly* from the traditional understanding of *Dasein*. Resoluteness that comes back to itself and hands itself down then becomes the *recapitulation* of a possibility of existence that has been handed down.'

20 *ibid.*

21 Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 385.

22 *ibid.*

23 Farias, Heidegger, p. 75.

24 Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 384.

25 Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), p. 502.

26 Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 384.

27 *ibid.*, p. 385.

28 See Farias, Heidegger, p. 75: 'The existence that has been (*gewesene*) which the *Dasein* must and can choose as exemplary, is that of the hero.' 'Führer' occurs on p. 76. Farias also speaks of an elimination on Heidegger's part of public opinion (*ibid.*), whereas Heidegger tirelessly emphasizes the inevitability of the 'fall' into publicness (*Offentlichkeit*).

29 *ibid.*, p. 75.

30 *ibid.*, pp. 75, 76.

31 On the French television program *Océaniques* that was devoted to Heidegger and broadcast in December 1987 on channel FR3.

32 Aubenque, 'Encore Heidegger', pp. 118–19.

33 Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 47.

34 *ibid.*, p. 48.

35 *ibid.*

36 Aristotle, *Politics*, tr. Hippocrates G. Apostle and Lloyd P. Gerson (Grinnell: Peripatetic Press, 1986), 1253a 3.

37 *ibid.*, 1253a 15.

38 *ibid.*, 1253a 29.

39 Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 175.

40 Aristotle, *Politics*, 1279a 22.

41 See Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 129: 'The "they" is an existential and belongs as a primordial phenomenon to the positive constitution of *Dasein*.'

42 *ibid.*, p. 167.

43 *ibid.*, p. 391.

44 *ibid.*, pp. 126, 128.

45 *ibid.*, pp. 42–3.

46 Sartre, *L'être et le néant*, pp. 302–3.

47 Jürgen Habermas, *Martin Heidegger. L'oeuvre et l'engagement*, tr. R. Rochlitz (Paris: Editions du Cert, 1988), pp. 69 and 53. See also chap. VI of *Discours philosophique de la modernité*, tr. Bouchindhomme-Rochlitz (Paris: Gallimard, 1988).

48 Who prefers to talk of 'self-understanding' or 'self evidence' (see Otto Pöggeler, *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie*, ed. Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert and Otto Pöggeler (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), p. 17 sq.).

49 See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

50 An expression of Ernst Nolte quoted by Marc Froment-Meurice at the beginning of his fine text 'Tourner la page?', *Nouvelle Revue de Psychanalyse*, 37 (1988).

51 Quoted by Otto Pöggeler, *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie*, ed. A. Gethmann-Siefert and O. Pöggeler (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), p. 41. This sentence, drawn from a marginal note to the lecture 'Der Ister', has not been reproduced in the published edition. To the extent that it concerns an 'intimate note' corroborated by numerous 'echoes' in the work, it seems to us symbolic of a very fundamental orientation in Heidegger's thinking.

52 Leibniz, *Philosophische Schriften*, vol. VII, ed. Gerhardt, p. 289.

53 A paradox which offers Jacques Derrida the pretext for *La carte postale* (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1980). See in particular pp. 71-5.

54 Heidegger, 'Geschick versucht sich an Geschick', in *Holzwege*, p. 311.

55 Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 385.

56 Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique* (Paris: Bourgois, 1987).

57 Dominique Janicaud, *La puissance du rationnel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), pp. 283ff.

58 See Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe (GA)*, 53, p. 98.

59 *ibid.*, pp. 203ff.

60 *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, p. 93; On the same page Führers are thought as 'the necessary consequence of the passage of being into errance' (our italics).

61 *GA* 39, p. 292.

62 Hölderlin, 'On the cycle of the Titans', IV, p. 218, quoted by Heidegger at the end of his *Introduction to Metaphysics*.

63 Heidegger, *GA* 53, p. 179.

64 Analyzed with a great deal of finesse by Michel Haar. See in particular two texts (so far unpublished): 'L'adversaire le plus intime. Heidegger/Nietzsche: proximité et distance'; 'L'Impensé ambivalent du Surhomme et la double pensée politique de Heidegger'.

65 *Cahier de l'Herne Heidegger* (Paris: L'Herne, 1983), p. 102.

66 Heidegger, *Nietzsche II*, p. 489.

67 *ibid.*, p. 388 (in the chapter on 'The ontologico-historical determination of nihilism').

68 'Was ist, ist das, was geschieht. Was geschieht, ist schon geschehen' (*ibid.*).

69 *Nietzsche II*, p. 397.

70 *ibid.*, p. 391. *Brauch* is a word which belongs essentially to Heidegger's vocabulary but which is very difficult to translate; see in particular, 'The saying of Anaximander', in *Holzwege*, pp. 338-9.

71 Heidegger already nominates this step as the *Schritt zurück* (*Nietzsche II*, p. 390).

72 See Heidegger, *Zur Seinsfrage* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1956).

73 This rereading does not pretend to be exhaustive, for it concerns one of

the densest and most difficult texts in this book, perhaps in the entire Heidegger corpus.

74 Heidegger, *Nietzsche II*, p. 392.

75 Heidegger, *GA 55*, p. 99.

76 See Dominique Janicaud, *Hegel et le destin de la Grèce* (Paris: Vrin, 1975); in particular, 'Anamnèse et destin', pp. 317–24.

77 The will to power was an openly proclaimed inspiration of the Nazi regime.

78 See Heidegger, *Nietzsche II*, pp. 314–34.

79 *Holzwege*, p. 102.

80 *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, pp. 72, 94.

81 Nietzsche, *Considerations inactuelles II* (Paris: Aubier, 1964), pp. 334–5.

82 Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, p. 93. Otto Pöggeler shows that 'spiritual resistance', according to Heidegger, was inseparable from an abstract conception of modern society and an ignorance of the specifics of the political dimension. See 'Heideggers politisches Selbstverständnis', in *Heidegger und die praktischen Philosophie*, pp. 48ff.

83 In particular, from §7, 'The un-truth as errance'.

84 Heidegger, *Holzwege*, p. 310.

85 See *GA 53*, p. 98.

86 Schellings *Abhandlung über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1871), p. 229.

87 *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1954), p. 26.

88 See Hans Jonas, 'Heidegger and Theology', tr. Louis Evrard, *Esprit* (July–August 1988), p. 187.

89 See Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1953), p. 152.



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## Heidegger's Nietzsche and the Third Reich

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Endre Kiss

The points of view adopted in our title which, on the one hand seeks to thematize Martin Heidegger's 'role' and, on the other hand, his 'fate' in the Third Reich, deliberately play on the ambivalence of Heidegger's own attitude. Was his 'role' in this time period the decisive issue? Did he in fact play a 'role' in the Third Reich? Or did he play a 'role' which diverged markedly from the one he really wanted to play? If however he did not play a 'role' then was he not rather subjected to a fate, a fate which he had to suffer, like many others? Many important investigations have recently appeared which seek to clarify the question whether he played a role or was simply subjected to a fate in Adolf Hitler's German state. None of these recent and thoroughly competent studies pays much attention to Heidegger's Nietzsche lectures. This is both comprehensible and incomprehensible at the same time. It is comprehensible in the sense that the philosophical opportunity of 'reconstructing' Heidegger's Nietzsche lectures has not yet been taken, either in the context of an academic discussion, or in that of Heideggerian apologetics, so that it readily came to appear as though the Nietzsche lectures were not necessary for arriving at a decision on the question concerning Heidegger's attitude toward the Third Reich. It is incomprehensible at the same time because Heidegger himself, in a 'preface' to the Nietzsche lectures, written in 1961, described the Nietzsche text as his *Denkweg*, a *Denkweg* which was certainly more important than anything that came before it or which followed after it.<sup>1</sup> It is also incomprehensible because, in a very obvious way, Nietzsche's philosophy represented the secret centre of the 'ideological' discussion in the Third Reich and this not only in a philosophical but also in a political sense. So that, for this reason alone, Heidegger, in the course of his extensive and intensive involvement with Nietzsche, had to take up a position with reference to the political realities of his time. What is incomprehensible does not become

any the more comprehensible if one takes into consideration the extent to which research into the fascist Nietzsche interpretation was delayed and indeed has still not been brought to completion. So it has to be admitted that, up till now, and in this specific connection, the Heidegger discussion has received little help from the Nietzsche research.

In order to arrive at an adequate conceptual and historical framework for assessing Heidegger's Nietzsche interpretation, a reconstruction of the relation of Heidegger to Alfred Baeumler is unavoidable. There are two reasons why Baeumler features as the key to an understanding of Heidegger's attitude toward the Third Reich. The first is the need to evaluate the close personal relationship between Heidegger and Baeumler and precisely in the time period immediately preceding the National Socialist takeover. The second reason is based upon the need to make a comparison of Baeumler's Nietzsche interpretation (especially, *Friedrich Nietzsche, the Philosopher and the Politician* (Leipzig, 1931)) with that of Heidegger. The interpretation of Nietzsche now remains the only material capable of demonstrating Heidegger's philosophical attitude toward the Third Reich concretely rather than apologetically. In this case the emphasis lies on the word 'philosophical'. In this aspect of the discussion about Heidegger, it is well known that whereas the question concerning the rectoral speech appears to be more or less settled, so that one is almost in a position to talk about a consensus, it is still being claimed that the episode with the rectorate has nothing to do with the philosophical substance of his work.

It is necessary however that we raise questions concerning what was specifically ideological in the Third Reich. In this field we find the most varied opinions. At one extreme, the position is adopted that the Hitler State had no 'genuine' and systematically worked out ideology. Everything that was said in this field was in the final analysis nothing but the meaningless and incoherent rhetoric of a self-assuming power. At the other extreme, we find opinions which talk about a coherent ideology of the Third Reich. The greatest problem encountered so far is that, hitherto, this comprehensive ideology has been described with concepts which have proved to be unsatisfactory instruments with which to describe this spiritually doctrinaire reality. In our opinion, this quest for a comprehensive ideologically integrating conception should not be given up – especially since, as we hope to show, Heidegger's philosophy is inseparably bound up with such a conception of National Socialism.

The quasi-philosophical, ideologically oriented picture which did in reality play the role of just such an integrating and all-encompassing ideology was that of Alfred Baeumler's Nietzsche interpretation. It is important to note that Baeumler's Nietzsche interpretation could only become the all-embracing ideological doctrine of the Third Reich because

it was able to confer a certain legitimacy upon this Reich. Dieter Grimm portrayed the situation as follows:

The older generation of Jurists who decided for National Socialism after 1933 could, in the last phase of the Weimar Republic, only represent the new state as a legitimate state with an independent judiciary. The younger supporters of a total state had already given up this position and justified themselves with reference to Carl Schmitt. For him the legal system was advisory – in striking contrast to the legality of a truly effective will. The latter was however no longer to be justified along the lines of a constitutional legalization. Schmitt claimed that legality as a thought form historically linked to the parliamentary law-giving state had become obsolete with the collapse of the latter in 1930. Therewith the state won its freedom from the bonds of legitimacy.<sup>2</sup>

This example relates to juridicial legitimation. But it goes without saying that the compass of legitimation is broader than 'just' the field of law. Alfred Baeumler's Nietzsche interpretation fulfilled the function of legitimizing the Third Reich. The core of his view of things related to the very difficult, indeed unsolvable, problem of legitimacy. If one holds that the will to power is metaphysical, in the sense intended by Baeumler, then it is possible to conclude that the Third Reich is legitimate. It can be so because, for all practical purposes, Baeumler identified a concept of the will to power drawn from Nietzsche with numerous features of the National Socialist movement (later, with the National Socialist state). Baeumler's Nietzsche interpretation turned out to be the most effective legitimation of the Third Reich not only for immanent reasons (connected with the content and systematic coherence of the doctrine) but also because its author, from 1933, took up that very position within the Nazi hierarchy which legitimized and authorized him. With regard to his position in the Third Reich, Baeumler was the man whose views on legitimacy were supported by the entire weight of the party, for example, by being widely distributed. To this it should be added that Baeumler was well known, at least in philosophical circles, as the man who conferred legitimacy upon the Third Reich.

It is this threefold qualification of Baeumler's Nietzsche interpretation as a direct and effective political legitimation of the Third Reich which defines the conceptual framework in which both Heidegger's Nietzsche interpretation and his personal relationship with Baeumler have to be investigated with appropriate care. In the light of these facts, the collaborative commitment, not to mention the friendship between Heidegger and Baeumler, cannot be seen as just an accidental personal relation. Hugo Ott compares Baeumler and Heidegger with two athletes in their

blocks, waiting for a good start in the new Reich. In my opinion, it is not so much a matter of individual athletes in their starting blocks as rather of a basketball team trying to gain the advantage by passing the ball to each other. The high point of this connection can be seen in the rift of 1934 when, in the final analysis, Baeumler, in conjunction with Heidegger, was unable to get a grip on the German university system and to permit his friend to play a leading role.

After this description of Baeumler's position in the Hitler state, it might seem as though we could go over to a comparison between Baeumler's and Heidegger's Nietzsche interpretation without further preparation. However, it would be impossible to do this and for a reason which is neither purely historico-political nor purely philosophico-systematic. This reason has to do first and foremost with the sociology of knowledge and is based upon the ideological quality of that Nietzsche interpretation through which Alfred Baeumler hoped to legitimize the Third Reich. Baeumler brought a new sociological quality to thinking which I have called Positive Political Metaphysics, especially in my study: 'On the concept of positive political metaphysics'.<sup>3</sup> Our presentation only becomes complete with this recognition of a positive political metaphysics. On the basis of a distorted, and at times simply false, Nietzsche interpretation, Baeumler created a positive political metaphysics while, at least until 1945, Heidegger remained in the frame of the above-mentioned sociology of knowledge. It is not a matter of Heidegger 'only' taking over Baeumler's interpretation and so offering a new Nietzsche interpretation of purely academic interest. The critical question bears not so much upon the many similarities between two Nietzsche interpretations which perforce had to be advanced in a political context under specific historical conditions. The critical question concerns the fact that Baeumler inaugurated a way of thinking by means of which he not only sought to legitimize the archaic intellectual edifice of a positive political metaphysics with reference to Nietzsche but also succeeded in promoting it to high intellectual rank. It goes without saying that Baeumler's legitimization project is rooted in a positive political metaphysics. If, therefore, we are going to assess Heidegger's taking over of Baeumler's Nietzsche interpretation, we have to take into consideration a variety of factors: behind this 'philosophical' interpretation there stands, on the one hand, a positive political metaphysics which, though fundamentally archaic, had been raised to full philosophical rank. On the other hand, this construction sought to accomplish the almost impossible task of legitimizing the Third Reich.

The politically actualized positive metaphysics is a clearly distinguishable way of thinking about the sociology of knowledge. It carried through the task of legitimizing the Third Reich and thereby brought to it a world-historical significance which even today has not been recognized

with sufficient clarity. Further attempts to explain this way of thinking, for example, with reference to 'irrationalism', as Georg Lukács has done in his 'Destruction of reason' with historically catastrophic results, can be refuted without difficulty through a simple comparison with this positive political metaphysics.

Undoubtedly, the most important qualifying characteristic of positive political metaphysics is *this-sidedness* (*Diesseitigkeit*). This means that the basis of a metaphysical construction is not transcendent, that is, not 'other-sided', as it is in most religiously coloured metaphysics and metaphorical, that is, no longer to be taken quite literally, as it still was in the great thought-constructions of classical German Idealism. A positive metaphysics is *political* when the basis of the metaphysical construction is taken from the sphere of the this-sided and is, in a broad sense, politically applied. The most important positive metaphysics for the modern philosophical tradition, Arthur Schopenhauer's metaphysics of the will, is an example of a supremely positive metaphysics which is not at all politically applicable.

The second, equally qualifying feature of positive political metaphysics is that it is thought as a *comprehensive law of being* (*Seinsgesetz*). It is from this trait that the destinally archaic, even atavistic character of positive political metaphysics can be most exactly derived. In the context of modern rationality and post-Kantian criticism, the very existence of such a thought-structure speaks for itself. The threefold negative attitudes of positive political metaphysics arise in part out of the previously named characteristics, in part from other reasons. It is *anti-historical*; it is *anti-scientific* and it is dedicated to the *elimination of the political* in favour of the supremacy of metaphysical laws of being. This last feature of positive political metaphysics proved to be the most important since it read an affirmation of the positive metaphysics of the will to power into every political (and *mutatis mutandis*: historical or scientific) event. It meant however that the political (historical, scientific, etc.) quality of these events was actually eliminated. All that remained over was the metaphysics.

Heidegger's Nietzsche interpretation also satisfies the strictest criteria of a positive political metaphysics defined in this way. Just like Baeumler, he interprets Nietzsche as a philosopher of the will to power and understands him as offering a this-sided, positive foundation for a law of being. He also understands the will to power (in its all-embracing compass) in a political sense. That is, he deliberately takes the extension of positive metaphysics in a political direction. Furthermore, he understands the this-sidedness of the will to power as a law of being, or, as it is often expressed, as the 'truth of being'. Martin Heidegger's Nietzsche lectures satisfy the above-mentioned negative criteria of positive, political metaphysics just as completely. The *anti-historical* feature finds expression

very frequently. What really takes place, the historical, normally acquires its significance by way of a metaphysical comparison with the law of being. The anti-scientific character of the Nietzsche lectures appears to be many-layered, most noticeably however on the destinal plane of Nietzsche philology. That it is the political terrain in which what is metaphysical in these texts is completely absorbed goes without saying. The struggle for world dominion, to take only one example, appears not as a political but as a metaphysical affair, governed by the law of being.

It is worth noting that Jean Wahl shows an astonishing sensitivity for the deep connection between the metaphysical and the political attitudes in the Third Reich. 'It [Heidegger's Germanic nature] allowed him to believe that, in the final analysis, everything depended upon the metaphysically distinctive people who, at the same time, were the people in the middle of Europe.'<sup>4</sup> Despite its terminological variations we take this insight of Wahl's to be theoretically well-founded. But our question remains, how this author (Wahl) can see this metaphysics of a philosophical people as so unproblematic that he can simply 'set this question aside'?

With this introduction and clarification of the concept of a positive political metaphysics we are already in a position to pull our earlier thesis together:

- (1) Alfred Baeumler's Nietzsche interpretation articulates a conception of the will to power as a law of being which proves to be the very political ideology through which the Third Reich seeks to legitimize itself.
- (2) This conception should not be taken as a 'simple' academic interpretation. In it we find articulated a clearly definable 'mental representation', a system of thought which can only be adequately interpreted along the lines of a sociology of knowledge.
- (3) At the beginning of the 1930s, Martin Heidegger stood in a friendly relation with Alfred Baeumler and this proved to be decisive in the first phase of Hitler's dictatorship.
- (4) Martin Heidegger's Nietzsche lectures, which in 1961 he singled out as his true *Denkweg*, is rooted in the paradigm of Baeumler's conception of the will to power as a law of being.

Our last point is already directed towards a 'purely' philosophical content. The question of where the National Socialist commitment makes itself known in Heidegger's philosophy answers itself. The presentation of a metaphysical principle of the will to power as a law of being does not in itself amount to a philosophical National Socialism. It can be regarded either as an archaic, pre-critical and to a certain extent therefore also 'dangerous' conception or, on the other hand, and from a historico-philological standpoint, as a false interpretation of Nietzsche. But when

one bears in mind that this conception emanates from what was at that time the leading ideologue of the Third Reich and was sanctioned as such, as also that it was this conception which was employed to legitimize the Third Reich, it then becomes necessary to reassess one's views as to how Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's will to power as a law of being is to be judged. To act as though it was only an accident (both 'personal' as well as intellectual) that this interpretation comes close to Baeumler's is to succumb to a naivety which belongs neither to reason nor to morality – still less to a moral assessment of reason. Right up to the very end of the Third Reich, Heidegger's Nietzsche interpretation falls under the rubric of Baeumler's theses. This is the position upon which we have wished to lay the greatest stress. However, we do not mean by that to deny that there might have been several, for the most part minor, modifications *within* this paradigm. The working out of these modifications does therefore, in the final analysis, serve to reflect the changes in Heidegger's philosophy and world view over the period in question.

'Introduction to metaphysics', written in 1935, speaks against the theory that Heidegger withdrew into the province of pure philosophy after 1933–4, that is, after becoming aware of his mistake over the rectorate. Indeed, he seeks here to prove that the 'fate of a people' can hardly be determined without the help of philosophy. What is most important about the philosophical significance of this work, and what touches Nietzsche most closely, can again only be presented in terms of the Baeumler paradigm. He is perfectly aware of the anti-metaphysical dimension of the young Nietzsche (above all on the basis of 'On truth and lies in the extra-moral sense') but neutralizes these tendencies in order to be in a position, to put it simplistically, to defend the metaphysical claims of positive political metaphysics against the anti-metaphysical approach of Nietzsche himself. The full force of this work for Heidegger's Nietzsche reconstruction (in truth the betrayal of Nietzsche implied therein) consists in this, that Heidegger turned out to be someone who took full cognizance of the anti-metaphysical Nietzsche. There can therefore be no question of his positive metaphysical interpretation of Nietzsche being derived *directly* from his Nietzsche reading.

The Nietzsche lectures from the years 1936 and 1937 still remain within the paradigm of the will to power as a law of being. These years also however attest to positions opposed to those of Baeumler. One such position is to be found in Heidegger's emphasis upon Eternal Return (*Die Ewige Wiederkehr*), which is largely underestimated by Baeumler. Another is to be found in the thematization of aesthetics in the context of Nietzsche's philosophy. These positions are to be understood as an explicit distancing from Baeumler, even though there is nothing like an overcoming of the metaphysical paradigm. One example in support of

the last claim is that the introduction of Eternal Return takes on a clearly metaphysical, that is, an ontologically regulated, character, so that for Heidegger there arises a new problem, that of determining the relation between these two kinds of metaphysics. This does not mean – and this has to be emphasized with regard to these years of revolt against Baeumler – that he himself managed to move beyond the paradigm in question.

In 1939, the will to power as law of being again dominates Heidegger's Nietzsche lectures. This is accompanied by a noticeable regression to the positions of the years 1933–5. At the same time he makes known his withdrawal from the significance accorded earlier to the thinking about the Eternal Return. The latter is now made to depend upon external historical events. Insight into this idea is now supposed to be determinative for 'future decisions'. And the will to power is now nominated Nietzsche's 'unique thought'. In this same year he identifies his acceptance of the thinking about the will to power with world war and emphasizes that 'the history of being' is decisive. As a result of his fidelity to the Baeumler paradigm, Heidegger is repeatedly forced to return to the legitimization of the *status quo*, in this case, to war – and this not only for personal but also for deeper structural and philosophical reasons. Though only on the surface and with certain hermeneutical difficulties, Heidegger clearly identifies 'legitimacy' with the will to power as a law of being, an identification which is entirely characteristic for two reasons. On the one hand, the identification of the will to power as a law of being with legitimacy does, as a matter of fact, fully confirm the concrete content of the will to power. To put it plainly, whatever takes place in the Third Reich is 'legitimate'. On the other hand, this expression acquires an additional relevance. With the onset of world war, Heidegger argues that the manifestation of the metaphysical principle has proved to be 'correct'. No other option remains open but to participate in the war and, in this way, to allow the law of being to prevail through one's own activity.

In the Nietzsche lectures of the year 1940, 'nihilism' emerges as possibly the most important new component. This nihilism is articulated in a way which is relatively independent of the complex of positive political metaphysics and is designed to found an attitude which will help to make the war, portrayed as metaphysical, more bearable. War is admittedly still presented as metaphysical. This insight is necessary in order that it should be reflectively conducted. Once again metaphysics legitimizes the *status quo*. The goal of a deliberately conducted war once again betrays the complicity of those philosophers who identify with the regime. This insight into the metaphysical reality of war brings with it the already mentioned, and wilfully coloured, nihilism, since the warmongers no longer believe in any highest values. At first sight this assessment appears both sober and objective – this war does not reflect any humanitarian features and can hardly be reconciled with the positing of highest values.



In fact, the 'valuelessness' of war equips the listener with an insight which permits him to participate in the war *nevertheless*, since it is in effect a metaphysical matter. Hence the necessity of emphasizing its wilful character.

The struggle for world dominion and the exposition of the supporting metaphysics brings to fulfilment an epoch of world history and of historical man; for here we find realized the most extreme possibilities of world domination and of the attempt, undertaken by man, to determine his essence from out of himself alone.<sup>5</sup>

So what has to be done is to 'determine one's essence from out of oneself alone', in other words, to struggle for 'the most extreme possibility of world dominion' without even possessing a valid world view. In other words again: one has to struggle for world dominion even if the latter cannot be brought into connection with any positive world view (hence the nihilistic element), because this struggle is determined by the will to power as a law of being. It would certainly be forcing matters to interpret this expression – and it is only one single example – as a sign of an 'inner resistance and an inner revolt' against the Third Reich. Besides, 1940 is the year in which Heidegger himself changes his concept of truth as *alethea* and, moreover, in favour of a hardening of the thinking about the will to power. As a symptom it is therefore a further confirmation of Heidegger's return to the positions of the years 1933–5.

In 1941 the new emphasis of existential ontology made its appearance in the Nietzsche lectures. Even the term 'existence' is new in this context. In as much as the law of being takes on Christian traits, Christian elements make their appearance as well. This year marks Heidegger's dissociation from any strong programme of the will to power as a law of being, which latter features as the index of his identification with the Third Reich.

Between 1944 and 1946 the picture changes again. Out of the nihilism stemming from the World War problems like those of language and technology appear as central moments of the two-thousand-year tradition of Western philosophy in the place of the positive political metaphysics of the will to power as a law of being. The scope of the principle of the will to power as a law of being was initially and self-evidently restricted to Germany and the Third Reich. Heidegger's shift to the West is therefore an all too evident sign of his new appreciation of the situation. Furthermore, the will to power is no longer a law of being which operates in a, so to speak, 'valueless' and objective fashion and so, on occasions, also leads to nihilism. Now being appears in essence as a value category and it is the occasional absence of values which attests to nihilism. Being is brought under the rubric of value categories – precisely in 1944–6!

One might add: the world is for him once again brought under the rubric of value categories. If one relates the modifications in these philosophical positions to what was then still the recent past, the fundamental shift in Heidegger's viewpoint becomes clear again. But that this shift set in spontaneously and had nothing to do with the military defeat of the Third Reich, is difficult to believe. The reality of the Third Reich is no longer conceived, or rather interpreted, as the consequence of a two-thousand-year history of the West. The very basis of metaphysics is changed. It has become 'Western'. A further indication of this shift is undoubtedly the fact that, in these years, Heidegger frequently attempts explicitly to connect elements of the Nietzsche interpretation with his main work *Being and Time* in order, in this way, to be able to demonstrate the continuity of his path of thought.

In the introduction we spoke about the 'role' and the 'fate' of Martin Heidegger in the Third Reich. At the beginning he played a considerable role while aspiring to play an even larger role. All this was built on the contents and the structure of positive political metaphysics. Later he did not so much play a 'role' in the Third Reich as rather submit to a 'fate'. But even in his accommodation to this fate he did not separate himself conclusively from the metaphysics of the will to power as positive political metaphysics.

Translated by Christopher Macann

## Notes

1 M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche I* (Pfullingen, 1961), p. 10.

2 D. Grimm, 'Die neue Rechtswissenschaft: Über Funktion und Formation nationalsozialistischer Jurisprudenz', in *Wissenschaft im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), p. 47.

3 Esp. in the paper 'Zum Begriff der positiven politischen Metaphysik', in *Recht, Politik, Geschichte* (Vienna, 1988).

4 J. Wahl, *Critique* (April 1956) Paris, p. 354.

5 M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche II*, p. 261.

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## Heidegger and the Imperial question

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Eliane Escoubas

In the *Parmenides* (lecture course of 1942–3),<sup>1</sup> Heidegger writes: ‘We think the political in a Roman, that is to say imperial, fashion’ (p. 63). Later he writes: ‘Since the imperial epoch, the Greek word “politics” means something Roman. As for the Greek, only the word remains’ (p. 67).

For Heidegger, then, it is a matter of marking a rupture between ‘Greek’ and ‘Roman’. Moreover it is a matter of remarking that our experience of the political is a thoroughly Roman and imperial experience, that the Roman and imperial experience extends its empire over all of modernity. The *Parmenides* exposes the foundation of this motive. This foundation obtains in what Heidegger calls the ‘mutation of the essence of truth’: the translation/interpretation of the Greek *aletheia* into the Latin *veritas*. Translation/interpretation means: radical displacement of the ‘domain of experience’ of truth and Being. Between the Greek domain of experience and the Roman domain of experience there is a rift: this rift inaugurates modernity. Modernity that, none the less, for Heidegger, does not seem homogeneous – we find an indication of this when Heidegger, speaking of the German words *falsch* and *wahr*, says that these are ‘un-German words’ (*undeutschen Wörter*) which have an ‘un-German meaning’ (*undeutsche Bedeutung*): these are words of Latin origin (*falsum*, *verum*). Within the German language something was taking place comparable to the displacement that took place historically between the Greek language and the Latin language: German, a double language, a ‘conquered’ language. Similarly, political modernity would be in the mode of *division*, supporting and transporting a rupture comparable to the displacement sustained in history between the Greek ‘domain of experience’ and the Roman ‘domain of experience’.

This theme is banal enough and at first glance only reproduces a well-known German tradition: that of rejecting Latinity. Furthermore,

Heidegger borrows the expression *undeutschen Wörter* (to qualify *falsch* and *wahr*) from the Grimm dictionary. As for knowing how the *Roman world* is thought in the German tradition, it will suffice to read Hegel in the 'Philosophy of history': Rome 'goes beyond' the Greek world by founding the abstract State, the aim of which is 'domination of the earth'. Certainly, in Hegel, the *negative* is always 'sublated', but Hegel's tone here remains extremely pejorative.

But is it sufficient to see in the 'Roman theme' of the *Parmenides* the pure and simple resumption of the German tradition? A term will detain us here: Heidegger designates the 'mutation of the essence of truth' as *das eigentliche Ereignis* ('the event/advent proper'). What does *das eigentliche Ereignis* mean? Event of the history of Being, advent of the 'political' – of Roman politics – upon the scene of history, 'the event proper' is an integral part of the *interrogation* of *Geschichte* in Heidegger's texts. But, and this will be my hypothesis, the interrogation of *Geschichte* is doubled by a properly Heideggerian scenario – the scenario of the 'turn', the *Kehre*. The Heideggerian 'turn' is not just a Germanic response to the Roman displacement-turn, but rather more an 'explanation' (*Auseinandersetzung*) of the Roman displacement-turn by way of the contemporary figure: *National Socialism*. One could say that twice, for Heidegger, history appeared on its proper scene, twice it is 'the same old story': in a word, *nihilism*. But, it seems to me, it is still more complex than this: for the three themes (the 'event proper', *die Geschichte*, the 'turn') are linked and so bound up together that each one is explained by way of the others. In a sense, Heidegger's 'explanation' of *National Socialism* is inseparable from his 'explanation' of these three themes.

In order to follow this double 'explanation', we will use three textual markers, all three from after 1933 and taken up in the following order: the *Parmenides* (1942–3); the *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935); *Nietzsche I* (1937) and *Nietzsche II* (1939–41).

Our guiding thread will be the analysis of Hannah Arendt<sup>2</sup> which, on one hand, situates the Heideggerian 'turn' *between Nietzsche I and Nietzsche II*, and, on the other hand, notes that Heidegger himself performed a 'reinterpretation' of the 'turn' in the *Letter on Humanism* (1946) – a reinterpretation in which the accent is no longer placed on the *will* (as in the two *Nietzsche* volumes), but on the relation between *Being* and *Man* (here Heidegger himself places the accent on the *continuity* of his thought, making *Sein und Zeit* appear as if it were preparation for the 'turn' itself). Now it seems to me that the *Parmenides* is precisely the textual hinge where once *again* a 'before' of reinterpretation (*already* itself a reinterpretation), is exposed.

### The *Parmenides* (1942–3)

Concerning the 'mutation of the essence of truth' or 'the event proper', the *Parmenides* puts the Platonic moment on the second level and places the Roman moment, contrarily, on the first. Thus the opposition, which is that of two 'domains of experience' and which takes the name 'translation', is situated not so much within the Greek world as between the Greek and the Roman. Thus nihilism (dealt with earlier in the *Nietzsche* volumes) finds its *beginning* in history: a Roman beginning. Again, it is necessary to determine the 'domain of experience' where European nihilism takes root. The major part of the *Parmenides* is devoted to this determination, notably paragraph 3: 'Clarification of the mutation of *aletheia*.'

Here the domain of experience proper to the *imperium romanum* finds its essential determination in the notion of *commandment* (*Befehl*), which is therefore the domain of experience of the Latin *veritas* (whereas the domain of experience of Greek *aletheia* is that of *bringing-to-appearance*, of *unconcealment*: *Unverborgenheit*). It is in this notion of *commandment* that Heidegger found the *reversal of history*, a reversal in which the rupture or division of a world takes root: its mutation (*Wandlung*).

Let us hold on to three strands of the Heideggerian text where this belonging together of the *imperium romanum* and the *commandment* is exposed:

(1) The word *imperium*. *Imperare*, *im-parare*, which Heidegger says means to install, to prepare, to dispose in advance, to dispose of something and thus to be master of it: 'The commandment [*Befehl*] is therefore the essential ground of domination [*Herrschaft*]; and not a contingent form of it.

(2) *The Roman gods*: whereas the essence of Greek 'divinity' obtains in the domain of *aletheia* (Greek gods are gods that 'reveal', that 'give signs'), the essence of the Roman gods manifests itself in *numen*, which is commandment and will (Heidegger adds that the God of the Old Testament is himself 'a god that commands', the *numen* is the imperative: 'Thou shalt', 'Thou shalt not'. To this the Greek gods are utter strangers).

(3) *Roman law* also takes up again the determination of sovereignty as commandment ('to have the right', 'to be within one's rights'). Whence a radical separation of Roman *justitia* and Greek *dikē* (which consists in the experience of *aletheia*). And Heidegger will connect 'justice' (*Gerechtigkeit*) back to *justitia* as Nietzsche enunciated it and in whose work it is of the order of *will* as *will to power*.

Let us take up again, therefore, the terms in which the domain of experience of the *imperium romanum* and the *commandment* is enunciated:

- (1) Domination, 'super-elevation', 'being superior' (*Obensein*),
- (2) Surveillance, control: 'overseeing' (*Übersehen*), 'on the lookout' (*Auf-der-Lauen-liegen*),
- (3) The *actio* of the *actus* (which substitutes for Greek *energeia*), the consequence of which is Caesarean 'conquest',
- (4) The felling (*Zum Fall bringen*) of other peoples; and this is the domain of the *falsum* (*fallere*: to fall, to cause to fall). The *falsum* is what 'falls', what runs aground (whereas the *pseudos* is inscribed in the experience of dissimulation and not at all in that of felling – and it is here that we encounter the theme of translation,<sup>3</sup>
  - (a) Felling takes two forms: either direct repression (war) or the indirect form (the trap that snatches by surprise) – deception as trickery,
  - (b) Indirect 'bringing to a fall' allows one to *fix* to the ground what one has grounded, what one has run aground. To fix in Latin is *pango*: the *pax romana* is the accomplished form of *felling*.

Therefore: *imperium romanum* = *pax romana* = *falsum/verum*.

These three notions designate the same 'domain of experience', that of the *commandment* (where the Latin *veritas* and the will to power come together). Let us note that Heidegger finds these features in the *Roman Church* where the imperial is given in the mode of *curacy*, the accomplished form of which is the Spanish Inquisition.

So the question is: can we assert that, in 1942–3, Heidegger considered the Roman Empire the historical figure in which National Socialist politics should be read? Heidegger did not make this claim himself.

Let us open a parenthesis in order to test (briefly and independently of the Heideggerian text) a possible Roman Empire–National Socialism confrontation.

We will engage three texts (among others):

- (1) *Rudolph Otto: The Sacred (Das Heilige)*, 1917. Otto determines the sacred by way of the notion of *numen* (*Das Numinöse*) and, symptomatically, he determines the 'numinous' by way of the very characteristics of Roman political form and in Latin terms: *tremendum* (the frightening), *majestas* (the *magnum*, power and political power), active force (*vis activa* or *actus*). And he finds these three characteristics joined in the term *Augustus* (*August* – imperial). The *numen* then, would be at one and the same time the feature of god, *imperator* . . . and perhaps later of the *Führer*.
- (2) *Simone Weil*; texts from 1940,<sup>4</sup> where the confrontation of the Roman Empire and Hitlerism is organized around the notion of terror. Simone Weil also takes up the constant deception of the Romans

with respect to other peoples. (We find the same argument in Montesquieu, though in a somewhat more ambiguous fashion).

- (3) *Franz Neumann: Behemoth – Structure and Practice of National Socialism – 1933–1944.*<sup>5</sup> Neumann's analyses, which bear exclusively on National Socialism, allow the similarities and differences with respect to the Roman Empire to appear. They are organized, it seems to me, around two features:

- (a) Roman colonial expansion and German expansion, with the notion of *Grossdeutsche Reich* and *Lebensraum* (living space). We will note, in particular, the theory developed by Ratzel: *the law of spatial growth* and the notion of *frontier*, which, writes Neumann, 'is not an arbitrarily fixed line, but a strip or band marking the meeting between a movement and a counter-movement'. Nevertheless, there is an important difference: the founding principle of National Socialism is the principle of 'a racial people'. Neumann shows that racism supplants nationalism, that sovereignty no longer resides in the State but rather in race ('ascent takes precedence over citizenship'). Hence, it seems to me, Roman imperialism is entirely different from that of National Socialism, and two Nazi theoreticians state this precisely – Carl Schmitt insists on the difference between 'Roman totality' and 'Germanic totality'. The first is said to be quantitative, the second qualitative. Alfred Rosenberg writes: 'Today we must choose [1927] between Crusade politics and territorial politics; between world imperialism and the racial will of the state; between Barbarossa and Henry the Lion; between the Stresemann-League of Nations and the racial National Socialist Germanic state' (for Rosenberg it is a matter of breaking free from English imperialism). *Mittel Europa*, therefore, is opposed to 'Roman totality'.
- (b) The concentration of power in the Roman Empire and the concentration of power in National Socialism: elimination of the distinction between the legislative and administrative functions (*Gleichschaltung*: the law of synchronization, that is, control from above – and also the Enabling Act of 24 March 1934 which conferred all legislative powers on the government). Comparable also are the figure of the *Führer* as 'charismatic leader' and that of *imperator* (cf. the *numen*). However, Neumann shows convincingly that the notion of the *totalitarian state* is very quickly abandoned in favour of that of the *Party* (after 30 June 1934). And again it is Rosenberg who writes in 1934 that 'the abstract totalitarian State belongs to the liberal phase . . . henceforth it is the party that matters'. Now the Party is not an organ of the State; it is an extremely hierarchical mass organization. Evidently we have nothing of this sort in the Roman Empire.

Apparently, then, the comparison between the Roman Empire and National Socialism encounters at least two limits: *racism* and *the Party*.

### *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935)

Let us pose the following hypothesis: the *Introduction to Metaphysics* (where an allusion is made, very equivocally, to National Socialism and where an allusion is also made to the Rectoral Address of 1933) contains absolutely no 'explanation' of National Socialism, but it does expose the elements of a 'launching' of a theoretical explanation in the figure of *Greek tragedy* that Heidegger does not touch on again and which will take place in the courses on Nietzsche. Why speak of the 'launching' of an explanation? Because *Greek tragedy* will serve as the 'inverted mirror' of National Socialism – or, rather, it will serve as a *counter-proof*, *before* the proof itself of the explanation: thus the counter-proof *precedes* the proof.

Three motifs concerning Greek tragedy in the *Introduction to Metaphysics*<sup>6</sup> will detain us here:

#### (1) The figure of Sophocles' *Oedipus*:

Let us consider the *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles. At the beginning *Oedipus* is the saviour and lord of the state, living in an aura of glory and divine favour. He is hurled out of this appearance, which is not merely his subjective view of himself but the medium in which his being-there appears; his being as murderer of his father and desecrator of his mother is raised to unconcealment. The way from the radiant beginning to the gruesome end is one struggle between appearance (concealment and distortion) and unconcealment (being). The city is beset with the secret of the murderer of Laius, the former king. With the passion of a man who stands in the manifestness of glory and is a Greek, *Oedipus* sets out to reveal this secret.<sup>7</sup>

*Oedipus Rex*: 'tragedy of unveiling' – tragedy of the passion for unveiling, the passion for *aletheia*. By *anticipation*, therefore, *counter-proof* of another 'tragedy' that we will designate, for the moment, as a tragedy of power.

#### (2) The *deinotaton* of the first chorus in Sophocles' *Antigone*:

Much is monstrous [*Unheimliche*],  
But nothing is more monstrous than man.

Around the *deinotaton* a constellation takes shape: that of the 'terrible'



[*Furchtbare*], of violence [*Gewalt*], of dreadful panic [*panische Schrecken*].

(3) It is here that the Heideggerian determination of the *polis* intervenes:

*Polis* is usually translated as city or city-state. This does not capture the full meaning. *Polis* means, rather, the place, the there, wherein and as which historical being-there is. The *polis* is the historical place, the there *in* which, *out of* which, and *for* which history happens. To this place and scene of history belong the gods, the temples, the priests, the festivities, the games, the poets, the thinkers, the ruler, the council of elders, the assembly of the people, the army and the fleet. All this does not first belong to the *polis*, does not become political by entering into a relation with a statesman and a general and the business of the state. No, it is political, i.e., at the site of history, provided there be (for example) poets *alone*, but then really poets, priests *alone*, but then really priests, rulers *alone*, but then really rulers. *Be*, but this means: as violent men to use power, to become pre-eminent in historical being as creators, as men of action. Pre-eminent in the historical place, they become at the same time *apolis*, without city and place, lonely, strange, and alien, without issue amid the essent as a whole, at the same time without statute and limit, without structure and order, because they themselves *as* creators must first create all this.<sup>8</sup>

Let us note that 'violence' is here the mode common to *techne* and *physis*.

These three motifs from the *Introduction to Metaphysics* converge in the Greek 'domain of experience': *aletheia*. Thus a quasi-'homologous' relation is woven between *Geschichte* and *aletheia*; thus the importance of *Geschichte* grows in the Heideggerian text:

for us history is not synonymous with the past; for the past is precisely what is no longer happening. And much less is history the merely contemporary, which never happens but merely 'passes', comes and goes by. History as happening is an acting and being acted upon which passes through the *present*, which is determined from out of the future, and which takes over the past. It is precisely the present that vanishes in happening.<sup>9</sup>

Two remarks: (1) the mutation of *aletheia* is enunciated in the *Introduction to Metaphysics* as a passage from *aletheia* to correctness, and this is the Platonic moment: the passage from *physis* to *idea*. The Roman 'event' is like a previously unperceived horizon. (2) The question of nihilism is presented as follows:

To forget being and cultivate only the essence – that is nihilism. Nihilism thus understood is the ground of the nihilism which Nietzsche exposed in the first book of *The Will to Power*.<sup>10</sup>

### *Nietzsche I (1937) and Nietzsche II (1939–41)*

Let us suppose that the 'turn' contains Heidegger's 'explanation' of National Socialism – that around the 'turn' Heidegger 'explains himself' with respect to National Socialism.

Let us recall the argument of Hannah Arendt. Hannah Arendt locates the 'turn' between *Nietzsche I* and *Nietzsche II*; what the 'turn' (accomplished in *Nietzsche II* but not in *Nietzsche I*) summons is the *will* in its culmination as *will to power*; what is implicated in the explanation of National Socialism is the will to power: Hannah Arendt asserts that this 'taking to task' of the will to power constitutes the settling of accounts with the 'event' of 1933. None the less, with the *Letter on Humanism* (1946) a reinterpretation of the 'turn' becomes manifest: for quite a while the will had not constituted Heidegger's focus of interrogation, but rather 'the whole of history, from the Greeks down to our day, understood in terms of the relation between *Being* and *man*'.

Hence, several questions: this reinterpretation of the 'turn' in 1946 by Heidegger himself involves, on the one hand, a retreat, a distance taken up in relation to the 'event' of 1933; but does this not also involve, on the other hand, a distance taken up in relation to the 'explanation' of National Socialism? Does this mean that Heidegger no longer feels the need to 'explain himself' with respect to National Socialism? Or has the 'explanation' taken on a whole new *dimension*? Could it be that for Heidegger it is not at all a matter of 'defending himself' by exhibiting 'proof to the contrary' (as will again be the case in the *Spiegel* interview), not even a matter of 'explaining his relation to' National Socialism or even of explaining National Socialism in itself? That the 'explanation' is taken up in an *entirely different questioning*? And perhaps history itself drew out, produced, this 'explanation' in the defeat of National Socialism? Has history thus itself become, at a certain moment, *aletheic*, itself the 'unveiling', itself presenting somehow the 'explanation'? It is in the *Parmenides* that the connection between *Geschichte* and *aletheia* is put to work most flagrantly.<sup>11</sup>

Let us first try to bring to light the steps Heidegger will take to arrive at this point – that is to say, pass through *Nietzsche I* and *Nietzsche II* and wind up at the *Parmenides*. My hypothesis is the following: the steps Heidegger takes represent the *end* of the 'explanation of his relation to' National Socialism, that is, its culmination as an 'explaining away' and

its inclusion within another dimension of questioning (that which sustains the reinterpretation of 1946).

### *Nietzsche I (1937)*<sup>11</sup>

Heidegger's thesis consists in the following: the relation between the *will to power* and the *eternal return of the same* denotes, in Nietzsche's work, *ontological difference*: 'The fundamental character of being as such [*des Seienden als solchen*] is "will to power". Being [*Das Sein*] is "eternal return of the same" ' (p. 35).

Now *power* is the essence of the will: 'He who says will says power, he who says power says will' (p. 52); the will to power is also 'will to will'.

The characteristic of will is the *commandment* (*Befehl*); the characteristic of power is the will to growth (the 'desire-to-be-always-more'). Consequently the accomplishment of will to power – which is 'will to will' – is nihilism: Heidegger repeats after Nietzsche: 'The will prefers to desire nothing rather than not to desire at all.' And *art* constitutes the counter-movement to nihilism: 'pure and simple metaphysical activity', art is 'will to appearance', therefore, 'anti-Christian movement', 'anti-nihilist' *par excellence*. The eternal return, which is the characteristic of Being, therefore escapes nihilism: it is the 'overcoming of nihilism' (*Überwindung des Nihilismus*) (p. 432) which is presupposed as the characteristic of being.

So, for Heidegger, Nietzsche's ambivalent terminology bears the mark of the ontological difference and ascribes nihilism to being as being.

### *Nietzsche II (1939–41)*

Henceforth Heidegger poses the essential unity of the *will to power* and the *eternal return* in Nietzsche's work: Nietzsche is no longer the thinker of ontological difference (the difference *will to power/eternal return*) but the thinker of *the end of history* (*endgeschichtlich*) (p. 13). Nietzsche's two thoughts think the same thing, the end of history, and together they are 'the last word of metaphysics' (p. 17). The 'turn', if it is effected here, is located at the moment where the theme of 'the end of history' takes the place of the theme of ontological difference in Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche.

Let us underscore the following points:

(1) In *Nietzsche II*, as in *Nietzsche I*, 'power' is self-intensification, self-aggrandizement. As in *Nietzsche I* the will to power is 'the supreme form

of domination and organization', it is commandment: 'man is destined to be the measure of being', and Heidegger speaks of 'the organized conquest of the earth' and of a 'centralization, which is the most general effect of the machine'.

(2) Nietzsche brings metaphysics to its culmination in that the transvaluation-devaluation he poses is destructive (*Zerstörerisch*) (p. 339). Destructive because, as in *Nietzsche I*, 'the will prefers to desire nothing rather than not to desire at all'. Destructive because it is 'destructive' of ontological difference: Nietzsche folds Being back into being. 'Nothing is said with respect to Being' (p. 339). Nietzsche's metaphysics is the culmination of the forgetting of Being: the *nihil*. Nietzsche's metaphysics is not an 'overcoming' (*Überwindung*) of nihilism but rather its 'accomplishment' (*Vollendung*). Destruction (*Zerstörung*), as the unique modality of Nietzsche's metaphysics, of *European nihilism*, sweeps out what, in *Nietzsche I*, was still determined as *anti-nihilism* under the name of *art*.

Consequently we have, on the one hand, the *Introduction to Metaphysics* and *Nietzsche I*, and, on the other hand, *Nietzsche II*. Between the two: the 'turn'. The 'turn': now Heidegger will no longer distinguish the thought of eternal return from that of the will to power in Nietzsche's work; now the character of the will to power (*nihilism*) invades everything – and now in Nietzsche's work, according to Heidegger, but also possibly in Heidegger's own work, the theme of ontological difference is effaced.

(3) Possibly in Heidegger's own work, for we will find in *Nietzsche II* an indication of another questioning. This indication is given to us by a term: the term *Machenschaft*. It is announced in the first text of *Nietzsche II* (1939) that 'the era of the absence of sense' which is the 'absence of the truth [*Lichtung*] of Being': that is to say, now truth is determined as *adequatio* and Being is swept out into being. Heidegger writes then: 'Die Vormacht des Seins in *dieser* Wesensgestalt heisse die *Machenschaft*' ('the pre-power of Being in *this* figure is called: *Machenschaft*') (p. 21).<sup>12</sup>

Now, we already find the term *Machenschaft* in the *Introduction to Metaphysics*. However, the clarifying text is the penultimate text of *Nietzsche II*: 'Projects for the history of being' (1941) where he writes: 'die *Machenschaft* (das Ge-stell)' (p. 471). *Machenschaft* says the same things as *Gestell*. Is this not the outline of another questioning: the injunction to question starting from *Gestell*?<sup>13</sup>

So, starting from *Nietzsche II*, I can enunciate again – and otherwise – my hypothesis. I will say that the end of Heidegger's 'explanation' of National Socialism will be the moment where he will have finished with the thought of the *end of history* as 'the last word of metaphysics'. In *Nietzsche II*, from the 'tragedy of unveiling' that it was in Greek times, history becomes the tragedy of planetary domination. But it is a misunderstanding to continue to speak of tragedy: tragedy took 'place' in the

domain of the experience of *aletheia* – it is necessary to speak of modernity in terms other than those of ‘tragedy’. The opposition sustained by *Nietzsche II* is therefore that of the *tragic* (Greek) and of *nihilism* (European). We can find an expression of this opposition in a course from the period where the ‘turn’ commences: *Grundfragen der Philosophie* (1937–8),<sup>14</sup> where the opposition of *astonishment* [*Erstaunen*] and *terror* [*Schrecken*] is enunciated:

In a-stonishment, the basic mood of the first beginning, beings are first brought to a standstill in a formal configuration. In terror, the basic mood of the other beginning, the dark vacuity of aimlessness and the weakening of resolve lies concealed behind every kind of progress and domination of beings.<sup>15</sup>

Thus we can come back to the *Parmenides*.

Heidegger’s verdict is clear: Nietzsche is ‘un-Greek’ [*schlechthin ungriechisch*] – ‘purely and simply un-Greek’ (p. 139). He is ‘Roman’, he thinks Greece in a Roman way: ‘Even for Nietzsche the true is the correct, the just. . . . Roman *veritas* has become the *Gerechtigkeit* of the will to power’ (pp. 77–8). ‘Jacob Burckhardt has contributed much to the idea that Nietzsche thinks the essence of Hellenism and its *polis* in a Roman manner. . . . Burckhardt thinks the whole of history according to three powers: State, religion, culture’ (p. 134).<sup>16</sup> ‘Nietzsche, Rilke, and psycho-analytic doctrine know nothing of *aletheia*’ (p. 231). That is why this transformation of Hellenism by Romanism is ‘an event [*Ereignis*] that touches on our historical *Dasein* most profoundly’ (p. 66).

We find Spengler on the same side as Nietzsche: in *The Decline of the West* ‘Spengler speaks nowhere, says nothing about, history [*Geschichte*]’ (p. 168). ‘If he really thinks, he thinks history [*Geschichte*] un-historically [*geschichtlos*]’ (ibid.).

How are we to understand *geschichtlos*?

What *geschichtlos* means is indicated starting from the determination of *Geschichte*: ‘it is the event [*Ereignis*] of the essential decision of the essence of truth, an event that is always the “yet to come” and never the past. But, in forgetting, we have submitted ourselves most severely to the past’ (p. 168). It is also manifest now that Nietzsche and Spengler think history starting from the past. Now there is only history as ‘thought starting from the yet to come’.

It is here, it seems to me, that the subsequent Heideggerian reinterpretation of the ‘turn’ justifies itself (*Letter on Humanism* – 1946): where the ‘turn’ is reinterpreted in terms of *continuity*. In fact, the theme of *Geschichte*, as *thought that thinks starting from the yet to come*, has been present throughout: since *Sein und Zeit*. But it does not take on its interpretative charge until now, after having passed through *Nietzsche I*,

*Nietzsche II* and the *Parmenides*, where it ceases to be a 'partial' theme and becomes a 'domain of experience' homologous to that of *aletheia*.

We find a recurrence of the theme of nihilism *ten years afterward*: it will be in *Was heisst Denken?* (1951–2) – where the fact that a course on Nietzsche is followed by a course on *Parmenides* no longer comes as a surprise. The course on Nietzsche *Was heisst Denken?* interrogates the saying of Zarathustra: 'the desert grows' [*die Wüste wächst*]. Heidegger comments:

'The wasteland grows'. It means, the devastation is growing wider. Devastation is more than destruction. Devastation is more unearthly than destruction. Destruction only sweeps aside all that has grown up or been built up so far; but devastation blocks all future growth and prevents all building. Devastation is more unearthly than mere destruction.<sup>17</sup>

This theme is not entirely new, since we already find *Verwüstung* (desertification) in *Beyond Metaphysics*. But here it has a particular resonance, for it is consonant with the theme of *Geschichte*. In fact Heidegger distinguishes here between *destruction* (*die Zerstörung*), which bears on the past, and desolation/desertification (*die Verwüstung*), which bears on the future. If *Geschichte* is thought that thinks/thinks itself starting from the yet to come, what desertification makes disappear is, then, *the very thought of history, of Geschichte* – not just the historical past, but the very historicity of history, the historic essence of history.

Two remarks then:

(1) If Nietzsche, even though he asserts the 'desert' through the voice of Zarathustra, thinks un-historically, it must be that he thinks the desert starting from the past: he does not think the desert but the *destruction*. In what sense does Nietzsche think the desert starting from the past? In the sense that he has not 'gotten beyond' Platonism but has merely 'inverted' it.

(2) So, is it not with this notion of desolation/desertification that the encounter of imperial Rome and National Socialism takes place? Is this how imperial Rome becomes the very figure of National Socialism? If so, must we not recognize that Heidegger's 'explanation' of National Socialism finds its accomplished theoretical form in the *Parmenides*? Must we not also recognize that the desolation/desertification of imperial Rome and of National Socialism is not just an 'end of history' in the nihilist, that is to say, metaphysical sense of the term. Rather: the form taken by 'catastrophe' in what one could call the Heideggerian 'vision' of history is something like the *entry into the un-thought*.

Here, again, it is Hannah Arendt who can shed some light. In *The*

*Life of the Mind*, volume I, in the chapter entitled 'The Roman answer', Hannah Arendt opposes Greek *thaumazein*, astonishment, and Stoic *nil admirari*, the 'do not be astonished by anything'. With Rome, writes Arendt, 'philosophy becomes the opposite of what it had been in Greece'. While the Greek experience is the experience of '*coming-to-presence*', of *unveiling*, the Roman-Stoic one is, writes Arendt, 'that of making disappear and rendering *absent* that which is present in reality' (it is the 'not wanting to see', the 'not wanting to know'). The catastrophe would be, then, when we can no longer be astonished by anything.

It seems to me, therefore, that Heidegger's assertion in the *Parmenides* must be understood in this context: 'We think the political in a Roman, that is to say, imperial fashion. . . . As for the Greek, only the word remains.'

Translated by Philip A. Leider

## Notes

1 *Gesamtausgabe* (GA) 54 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1982).

2 *The Life of the Mind* (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1981).

3 The theme of translation which I have explained in: 'La traduction comme origine des langues: Heidegger et Benjamin', *Les Temps Modernes*, 514-15 (mai-juin 1989).

4 In *Ecrits historiques et politiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960): 'Quelques réflexions sur les origines de l'hitlérisme' - two articles on 'Hitler et la politique extérieure de la Rome antique' and 'Hitler et le régime intérieur de l'Empire romain'.

5 The first English edition, 1941.

6 *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1976).

7 *ibid.*, p. 112.

8 *ibid.*, p. 117. We should remark that in the first version of the 'Origin of the work of art', which is also from 1935, the work of art is said to be the capacity of founding history.

9 *ibid.*, p. 36.

10 *ibid.*, pp. 169-70.

11 The courses on Nietzsche are now almost integrally published in the *Gesamtausgabe*. Nevertheless, we will refer here to the two volumes published by Heidegger himself in 1961 and which are currently designated by the titles *Nietzsche I* and *Nietzsche II*.

12 To me it seems entirely inadmissible to translate *Machenschaft* as 'machination' as Klossowski does in the French translation. It would be necessary, in fact, to manifest in the translation the kinship of this term with the terms *Macht*, *Vormacht*. Let us note that we also find the term *Machenschaft* in *Beyond Metaphysics*.

13 And/or the injunction to question starting from *Ereignis*. From this perspective let us remark that the theme of *Ereignis* appeared in prominent fashion after the *Beiträge* of 1936-8.

14 *GA 45* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1984). This course is situated precisely between those of *Nietzsche I* and *Nietzsche II*.

15 *Grundfragen der Philosophie* (1937–8), *GA 45*, S. 197.

16 Heidegger none the less recognizes in Burckhardt a ‘thinker of history’ (*Geschichtsdenker*) and not a ‘historian’ (*Historiker*).

17 *Was Heißt Denken?*, tr. Glenn Gray as *What is Called Thinking?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 29.



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## **Fundamental ontology and political interlude: Heidegger as Rector of the University of Freiburg**

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István Fehér

In April 1933 Heidegger assumed the rectorate of the University of Freiburg. The months following constitute the only period of his life – one which did not abound in dramatic events or spectacular changes – which gave rise to vehement reactions and sharp criticisms for reasons other than the philosophical views which Heidegger put forward. A university professor's getting elected rector is, to be sure, not an event which requires special attention: it is well within the limits of a normal academic career. It was, however, at an extremely delicate moment, a few months after Hitler's appointment as chancellor, that Heidegger took over this office – and this, of course, is not without importance. What are the reasons which led Heidegger to assume this office, and what prior judgments about the era underlie his decision? And more akin to the concerns of this book, is this decision connected with his philosophy, and if so, how?

In what follows, an attempt will be made, first, to sketch Heidegger's basic philosophical outlook leading up to, and as elaborated in, *Being and Time*, concentrating on those tenets which can be shown to have some bearing upon his political involvement. This preliminary analysis will be followed by a reconstruction of Heidegger's conduct during his period as rector. I think that his activity as rector should be explored against the background of his philosophical outlook and of concrete historical circumstances, rather than stripped of (both philosophical and historical) context and judged by extrinsic criteria – that is, mainly by reference to what the social movement (national socialism) to which he temporarily committed himself subsequently became.

## I Heidegger's philosophical outlook by the end of the 1920s

### I.i

One might briefly characterize Heidegger's fundamental philosophical efforts leading up, after more than ten years' silence, to the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927 – as found, e.g., in his lectures of the period, now gradually appearing in the *Gesamtausgabe* – as an attempt to unify the so-called irrationalistic or 'existentialist' or 'historicist' problematic which permeated post-war European culture (and was represented by thinkers like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Spengler, Dilthey, and Simmel) with the Husserlian ideal of 'philosophy as strict science' (and, thereby, through Husserl, with the whole epistemological-metaphysical tradition going back to Aristotle and the Greeks).

Brought up in the scholastic tradition, but extremely responsive to the contemporary logical-epistemological ways of philosophizing represented by neo-Kantianism and phenomenology, Heidegger had as early as his doctoral dissertation and his *Habilitationsschrift* (published in 1914 and 1916, respectively) hoped to pose the Being-question, viz., to renew the metaphysical tradition.<sup>1</sup> His appropriation of the modern logical-epistemological tradition is conditioned from the very beginning by his endeavor to arrive at metaphysical conclusions; doing pure logic, epistemology or methodology, indispensable though it may be as a preparatory step, is seen by him as futile when conceived as an aim in itself.<sup>2</sup> His gradually deepening acquaintance with Husserl's phenomenological method provides him, in addition to theoretical insights, with a new access to classical philosophical texts, especially those of Aristotle and the Greeks.<sup>3</sup> His intense studies of the philosophical tradition as well as of modern philosophical trends thus become fused within a perspective which does not separate systematic and historical points of view. From this perspective, traditional doctrines no longer appear as mere relics worthy of only antiquarian interest, as opposed to the theoretical validity possessed by contemporary doctrines. Rather, traditional tenets are seen both as illuminating modern theories and as illuminated by them, and contemporary positions as proceeding from earlier ones.<sup>4</sup> Historical interest, in this sense, is strictly connected to systematic interest – indeed is at the service of it. Only if history is not 'pure history' – that is, a heap of past and dead facts – will the history of philosophy regain its relevance for systematic thinking (cf. GA 1: 195ff., and later GA 61: 110f., GA 24: 31f.).

This point is important for our present purposes, not only because it sheds light on some of the presuppositions of Heidegger's first philosophical attempts, but because we need to realize that the *systematic* positing and working out of the Being-question proposed in *Being and Time*<sup>5</sup> rests upon a preliminary confrontation with the tradition. This point has

become clearer since the publication of some of Heidegger's Marburg lectures. Further, Heidegger's way of approaching the history of philosophy already contains a conception of history implicitly – one to be thematized explicitly in *Being and Time*, and particularly relevant to his engagement with politics. Studying modern logical or epistemological theories in order to use them for metaphysical purposes meant, for Heidegger, recognizing the fact that such theories are not exempt from metaphysical presuppositions.<sup>6</sup> Nor, inversely, can metaphysical or ontological theories be exempt from logical or epistemological presuppositions; that is, from more or less explicit assumptions concerning human thinking or knowing – in short, from a theory of man as a rational animal (see e.g., *GA* 20: 174). The insights into the metaphysic-ladenness of the logical-epistemological tradition and into the logic-ladenness of traditional ontology may be said to be the two basic, and reciprocal, results of Heidegger's early confrontation with, and appropriation of, Western philosophy. The necessity of positing the Being-question as the question to be asked first and foremost is derived, for Heidegger, from the highly paradoxical result of his confrontation with Husserl's phenomenology (the most advanced transcendently oriented epistemology of the day). Indeed, Husserl, though claiming to suspend or bracket 'assertions concerning being', cannot help committing himself to certain prior ontological distinctions, in particular, that between Being as consciousness and transcendent being – which Husserl himself called, symptomatically, 'the most radical of all distinctions of Being' (Husserl 1976: 159). This prior commitment is left completely unthematized, having been antiphenomenologically (that is, dogmatically) assumed (see *GA* 20: 157f., 178). If the claim to dispense with the Being-question is thus shown to be a pure illusion, necessarily presupposing a dogmatic prior answer to it, exempt from and unsusceptible to any kind of critical examination (or, in other words, if dispensing with it turns out to be equivalent to answering it without first posing it), then the situation seems simple enough: what is needed is to explicitly pose or thematize this first and foremost question of all philosophy. In the light of the recognition, however, that traditional ontology is from its very beginning grounded in, or centered around, the doctrine of *logos*, i.e. logic,<sup>7</sup> an uncritical natural recourse to any kind of traditional ontological perspective must be out of the question. It even remains uncertain if the Being-question, lacking a prior ground in which to be embedded, can be posed at all.<sup>8</sup>

The way out of this impasse was suggested to Heidegger by his insight into the strict correlation between being and *logos* in Western philosophy – more concretely, by an ontological thematization of logic, of the theoretical-cognitive attitude or comportment (*Einstellung*) in the broadest sense. Heidegger's starting points were (1) the correlation of being and *logos* in the history of philosophy; (2) the functioning of the *logos* of

the 'subject' as the 'ground' or 'place' of the ontological problematic properly so-called; and (3) logic as the theoretical comportment *par excellence*. Thus he was able to thematize the *being* of the subject in a deeper way than that provided by the tradition – one capable of showing the very epistemological comportment as a derived mode of being. This offered a possible operative basis for the positing and working out of the Being-question. The metaphysical tradition from Aristotle onward had gained its access to Being from within the conceptual horizon provided by the theoretical attitude, giving thereby rise to theories of Being in terms of objective presence. That this comportment was far from being *the* original mode of being of human existence was, however, an insight which required the prior unification of the Husserlian perspective of philosophy 'as strict science' with the 'anti-metaphysical', 'existentialist' tradition.<sup>9</sup> Contrary, however, to the tendency of thinkers like Pascal, Kierkegaard, Dilthey, and Nietzsche to combine a turning to factual-historical human existence with a turning *away from* metaphysics, and thus totally to reject systematic thinking, Heidegger's appropriation of the problematic of factual-historical life was conceived from the very beginning as a starting point *for* the renewal of metaphysics. The posing and working out of the Being-question pertains to what Heidegger calls fundamental ontology. As the above considerations suggest, this becomes embedded in, and begins with, a thematization of the *being* of the subject – a discipline named existential analytic.<sup>10</sup> The immanent critique and internal radicalization of phenomenology and epistemology, and the attempt at a radical re-examination of the whole metaphysical tradition through the assimilation of the 'irrationalistic' problematic, are fused in Heidegger's effort to gain a new ground for the Being-question.<sup>11</sup>

## I.ii

Man's<sup>12</sup> fundamental mode of being, Heidegger claims in *Being and Time*, is Being-in-the-world. His original relation to things emerging in his environment is one of using, handling, employing, arranging rather than 'knowing' them. These are modes which presuppose antecedent acquaintance, familiarity, with the world. Even 'knowing' things is one way of having to do with or caring about the world – a comportment which comes about as a modification of man's original relating himself to things. A phenomenological description of man's primary way of being should, therefore, suspend, i.e., 'put into brackets', scientific or epistemological concepts and strategies of description. Only thus will it be sufficiently original, sufficiently unaffected by traditional theories concerning the issue, and able to *derive* scientific comportment from man's primordial way of relating himself to his world. If, apart from and prior to any kind of self-description such as 'the totality of foundational connections of true statements',<sup>13</sup> science is primarily one of man's modes

of being – ‘not the only and not the first possible mode of being’ at that (SZ 11) – then existential analytic must not resort to the conceptual framework provided by science. To do so would imply losing the possibility of gaining a perspective upon it.

Without going into the details of Heidegger’s description of Being-in-the-world, it may be relevant to see how the epistemological problematic, with which Heidegger had first engaged himself on his way to *Being and Time* and whose insufficiencies led him to assume an explicit ontological standpoint, is treated within the framework of the new ontological perspective.

Given his thesis that man’s primordial mode of being is Being-in-the-world, Heidegger’s treatment of the epistemological tradition from Descartes on has two major aspects: a negative, or polemic, one and a positive, or ‘integrating’, one. As to the first, he shows that the epistemological perspective properly so-called (with its typical questions concerning the relation of the subject to the object, of mind to the world, the way the knower can acquire knowledge about the object) is not meaningful without a prior ontological dualism such that knower and known, subjects and objects are assumed to be two separate entities, their relation being one of mutual exclusion (subject is what is not object and vice versa). However, if man and world are not two independent entities, and human *Dasein* is not the worldless (*weltlos*) ‘subject’ characteristic of modern philosophy, but is in itself worldly (*weltlich*), having always already committed itself to the world, then the ontological ground underlying the epistemological perspective becomes untenable.<sup>14</sup> Heidegger’s attitude is negative or polemic in that he elaborates his concept of *Dasein* and Being-in-the-world by opposing them to, and challenging, the traditional concepts of ‘subject’ and ‘object’. He insists that Being-in-the-world, as *Dasein*’s fundamental mode of being, must not be conceived of as an epistemological relation between subject and object.

Having developed his concept of Being-in-the-world through a contrast with the subject-object relation, he is in a position to show how, in virtue of what modifications of Being-in-the-world as an all-encompassing phenomenon, man’s *knowing* relation to the world springs. This may be called the positive, or integrating, aspect. Heidegger shows, in a series of analyses, that in order for a thing to become an object of knowledge or scientific research, our preliminary access to it, that is, our way of having to do with it, must have undergone a specific modification. Only as a result of this will the thing as tool originally made use of, or handled, reveal itself as a neutral substance, simply ‘out there’, susceptible of being determined by what traditional philosophical theories have come to call ‘qualities’ and ‘properties’.

Heidegger illustrates his point with critiques of Descartes’s conception of the world and of Kant’s Refutation of Idealism. He shows that

Descartes's definition of world in terms of *res extensa*, that is, a neutral, indifferent space filled up with equally neutral, homogeneous substances, fails, in the light of Heidegger's own analyses of 'world', to do justice to the genuine phenomenon of world met with in everyday experience – indeed, is based upon losing sight of and forgetting it. This is the negative aspect of his treatment of Descartes. However, that definition of world reflects a theoretical-intellectual comportment to the world (itself one way of Being-in-the-world), one which presupposes that what the glance characteristic of mathematical knowledge discovers in things constitutes their *real* being (see SZ 95f.). This is the positive, or integrating, aspect.

As far as Kant's Refutation of Idealism is concerned, Heidegger first shows some of the inconsistencies inherent in Kant's proof of the existence of the outer world. Then, more significantly, he proceeds to undercut the very bases of Kant's undertaking, insisting that the quest for a proof of this sort is not meaningful unless one assumes the Cartesian standpoint of the isolated subject. Indeed, once man is assumed to be basically Being-in-the-world, the question of how a knowing subject can get out of its interiority in order to ascertain the existence of, and establish a contact with, the outside world – the major epistemological problem of modern philosophy – loses its legitimacy. Attempts to demonstrate the 'reality' of the outer world, or, for lack of such a demonstration, the mere 'belief' in or presupposition of such a world (comportments which are themselves definite ways of Being-in-the-world), do not make sense without the prior assumption of a subject closed in itself – a subject which, uncertain about its world, should begin by acquiring certainty about it. The question of whether or not there is a world, and whether its being can be proven, Heidegger remarks significantly, is without sense for human *Dasein* conceived as Being-in-the-world – and who else could pose it (SZ 202)? If there is a legitimate question, it concerns rather the reasons why *Dasein* as Being-in-the-world tends to sink, *erkenntnistheoretisch*, the 'reality' of the outer world into nothing in order to produce, after splitting up the unified phenomenon, infinite hopeless attempts to put together the two wrecks left: the isolated subject and the outer 'world' (SZ 206).<sup>15</sup>

The aspects of Heidegger's existential analytic singled out thus far show how Heidegger's own ontological perspective enables him to make visible the implicit ontological framework latent in traditional epistemological-metaphysical thinking. Traditional ontologies are shown to be rooted in *Dasein*'s ways of relating itself to its world. The analytic of *Dasein*, by proposing to illuminate deeper and more original dimensions of *Dasein*'s being, both criticizes or dismisses *and* integrates or 'justifies' them (in the specific sense of revealing their condition of possibility).

I.iii

What remains to be seen is the way in which the irrationalistic or existentialist or historicist problematic, accompanied by a strong anti-metaphysical bias in the thinkers who gave rise to and defended it, joins in, and becomes an integral part of, Heidegger's systematic ontological perspective.

The question of how Heidegger's ontological treatment of the epistemological perspective within a neutral analysis of *Dasein* relates to a Kierkegaardian problematic of authenticity is not easy to answer. Arguing along the lines elaborated by Richard Rorty (see Rorty 1979: Ch. 8, especially 360ff.), it might be claimed that knowing the world is just one among many human projects of edification (not the primary one, Heidegger would add). It might then be suggested that it is because the project of knowing the world has traditionally been assumed to be *the* proper path to authenticity (an assumption congruent with the prevailing conception of man as a rational animal<sup>16</sup>) that authenticity, for the epistemological-metaphysical tradition from Descartes on, was not, and could not be, a problem. (It became a problem, symptomatically, only for non-metaphysical thinkers like Kierkegaard.) Because Heidegger sets out to get behind the view of man as a rational animal, it is natural that the problem of authenticity will become an explicit problem for him, one distinct from the problematic concerned with knowing. We might also say, using the terms of our previous description of Heidegger's way to the Being-question, that the neglect of the question of authenticity by the epistemological-metaphysical tradition is a matter of answering it without first having posed it.

The question concerning *Dasein*'s inclination to dissolve the outer world into nothing is answered by Heidegger by reference to man's basic tendency to *Verfallen*. This is an encompassing concept of inauthenticity, characterizing a tendency inherent in everyday *Dasein* to interpret the world and itself within the horizon of what turns up *within* the world, thus taking itself to be one among the entities existing alongside others in the world (cf. SZ 58). The possibility of *Verfallen* lies in the fact that *Dasein* as Being-in-the-world is always already alongside (bei) beings in the world. Indeed, because, as early as the Greeks, Being was interpreted in terms of beings in the world (cf. SZ 44), the concept of inauthenticity provides what we have been calling an integrating aspect. It does so by accounting for the failure of traditional ontologies to seize upon the ontological problematic proper – a major reason why Heidegger names his investigation 'fundamental ontology'.

Considerations concerning authenticity emerge basically in connection with the concept of *Being-with* (Mitsein). The 'existence' of other human beings is for Heidegger as unquestionable as that of the 'outer' world.

*Dasein's* way of relating itself to others is called (parallel with, and contrary to, man's *Besorgen* with the things of his environment) *Fürsorge*, care for. This has, apart from the deficient and negative modes characteristic of everyday Being-with, two positive modes: 'leaping in' and 'leaping ahead' (Einspringen, Vorausspringen). The first is characterized by taking the 'care' over and away from the other, 'leaping in' for him in order to do what constitutes the other's concern *for* him. The other may thereby become dependent and dominated. The second, by contrast, does not refer to the other's *Besorgen* with things. One 'leaps ahead', not in order to disburden the other, but rather to give him back his authentic and primordial care, that is, his existence, thereby helping the other to become conscious of it and free for it (cf. SZ 122; for a fuller analysis see Elliston 1978: 66ff.). Everyday Being-with, however, is characterized by *Dasein's* losing itself in the faceless amorphous anonymity of the 'One' (das Man). Only therefrom can it pass to the authentic way of existing.

The full concept of authenticity is developed in the second division of *Being and Time*. Living originally in an inauthentic way, *Dasein* can reach authenticity only in Being-toward-death (Sein zum Tode) and resoluteness (Entschlossenheit). The concept of authentic existence is often explained very crudely as something denoting an aristocratic detachment from, and a scornful contempt of, everyday life. A closer examination of the Heideggerian texts lets one dismiss this reading as wholly unfounded. Deriving as it does from inauthenticity, authentic existence remains forever bound to it: it is but the constant transition or passage from the inauthentic existence to the authentic, and not a kind of independent realm opposed to it. Authenticity, to put it briefly, consists in consciously setting a limit to one's manifold possibilities – seeing them against the background of one's ultimate possibility, that is, death. This resolution, once taken, is capable of transforming one's life into a whole and giving oneself selfhood (Ganzheit, Selbstheit). The authentic project of Being-toward-death is then confirmed, on the part of the factually existing *Dasein*, by the phenomenon of conscience. *Dasein's* proper response to the call is, first, to make itself ready for it, that is, to-want-to-have-conscience (Gewissen-haben-wollen), and second, resoluteness. Rather than eluding death by escaping into the anonymity of everydayness, authentic *Dasein* anticipates it; rather than averting the call of conscience, thereby precluding becoming *itself* and being responsible for what it is, *Dasein* resolutely assumes it. Both ways enable *Dasein* to be authentic (eigentlich), that is, to appropriate the being it already is. On a closer look, resolution turns out to be not only compatible with, but even requires, authentic Being-toward-death. If resolution arbitrarily varied, without a view to death as *Dasein's* ultimate possibility, there could be no question of resolution being authentic (SZ 302, 305ff.; see Gelven



1970: 176; Demske 1963: 48f.; Ugazio 1976: 48). The unified concept of authenticity is therefore anticipatory resoluteness (*vorlaufende Entschlossenheit*). Resoluteness in its turn gives rise to 'situation'. The latter does not mean a set of conditions given in advance, but rather being revealed and disclosed only by and in resolute *Dasein* (cf. SZ 299f.). Authentic *Dasein* should nevertheless not persist rigidly in any one situation; it has to leave itself open for the possible, and indeed necessary, re-appropriation of itself. Since the relapse into the existential irresolution of *das Man* remains a constant possibility, it is only in repeating, retrieving itself that resolution is what it is (SZ 307f.).

For the full concept of authenticity to be arrived at, however, a further addition is needed. The question of what should fill in the 'content' of resolution is, Heidegger repeatedly claims, no part of the existential analytic. It may be answered only by resolution itself. However, it is legitimate to ask whence such possibilities may arise (SZ 294, 383). This origin is history. Resolute *Dasein* opens up its possibilities by taking upon itself a given heritage of the past – a heritage in which it resolutely hands itself down. Grasping its innermost finitude in anticipating death, *Dasein* is driven back to itself. In handing itself resolutely down in a freely chosen tradition, it acquires destiny (*Schicksal*). Seen from the perspective of Being-with, authentic historicity reveals itself as the common destiny of a community (*Geschick*) – a community in which the destinies of individuals are preliminarily assigned their role (SZ 384). It is not necessary, Heidegger remarks, that *Dasein* should explicitly be aware of the origins of the possibilities upon which it projects itself. But there lies in it the possibility to derive its project (the 'content' of its resolution) explicitly from a tradition. Resoluteness, coming back upon itself from fallenness and handing itself down consciously, becomes then the repetition, or retrieval (*Wiederholung*) of an inherited possibility of existence.<sup>17</sup> To 'repeat' in this sense does not amount to 'make a piece of the past actual again', 'bringing it back', but rather 'retorting', 'replying' to a past possibility of existence (SZ 385f.).

## II Heidegger the Rector and his philosophy

This short sketch of Heidegger's philosophical development, together with a quick survey of the basic philosophical outlook of *Being and Time*,<sup>18</sup> puts us in a position to proceed to our proper theme. We can now set about answering our initial questions – above all, the question of how Heidegger's assuming the office of the rectorate can be connected to his philosophy. In doing so, we shall return to and single out some of the themes previously touched upon, and occasionally thematize them in more detail.

## II.i

Authentic existence, as we have seen, was explained in *Being and Time* in terms of anticipatory resoluteness. Coming back upon itself from the world of inauthenticity characterized by the anonymity of *das Man*, resolute *Dasein* does not become detached from the world. This would be impossible, for *Dasein* is and remains Being-in-the-world all along (cf. SZ 298). Resoluteness implies, on the contrary, entering fully into the world, opening up and projecting oneself upon the (finite) possibilities which offer themselves in a given situation. It is in anticipating death, in becoming aware of what it means *not* to be, that the awareness of what it means to be becomes accessible. Although in anticipation and conscience *Dasein* becomes isolated, deprived of all its (inauthentic) links (that is, it becomes precisely its own self), nevertheless, in choosing itself, *Dasein* not only chooses itself 'out of' the world (to use Kierkegaard's illuminating terms), but at the same time and in the fullest sense, chooses itself 'back into' it (cf. Kierkegaard 1957: 265; see Chiodi 1965: 107; Guignon 1984: 337f.). It is also resoluteness that makes authentic Being-with possible, permitting *Dasein* to let the others 'be' in and for their own being. Once free for its own possibilities, *Dasein* is both free of the danger (inherent in its tendency to fallenness) of losing sight of or ignoring others' possibilities – possibilities which may supersede its own – and of the temptation to reduce them to, and thus take them to be identical with, its own.<sup>19</sup> 'Leaping ahead', as the authentic positive form of Being-with, gains its full concreteness only in and by resoluteness. As opposed to inauthentic *Dasein's* tendency to disburdening (Entlasting), only the willingness-to-have-conscience, the assumption of one's own being, makes responsibility for oneself and others possible. Only resolute *Dasein* can become the 'conscience' of others (cf. SZ 122, 127f., 288, 298; see also Demske, 1963: 66). The thesis that *Dasein* is always its own, that it exists for its own sake, Heidegger says, does not imply egoism; the concept of *Dasein* is not equivalent to that of the isolated, egoistic subject. Because only in relating to itself can *Dasein* understand something like 'self' (selbst), only thereby can it listen to a 'you-self' (Du-selbst), and thus make something like human community (Gemeinschaft) possible (GA 26: 244f.).

Anticipatory resoluteness, therefore, points to something like social activity, or engagement. However, the analysis of authenticity is not yet complete. The concept of resoluteness, as we have seen, attains its ultimate form as a result of the analysis of historicity. If resoluteness, at an earlier level, meant keeping itself free to *retrieve* itself (Wiederholen), then authentic existence appears now, at the level of historicity, as the retrieval of a historical heritage that has been both handed down and freely assumed – a heritage in which *Dasein* hands itself over (SZ 308,

383ff.). By freely and resolutely taking over a historical heritage, authentic existence acquires its destiny (Schicksal). Authentic Being-with thereby becomes, at the level of history, a common fate (Geschick), a community of authentic people (SZ 384f.). It may even be said that it is only in and by *Wiederholung* that its own history reveals itself to *Dasein* (SZ 386).

## II.ii

If the existential analytic (moving, according to its hermeneutic character, in a circle) is guided by a 'presupposed' idea of existence, and if philosophy, for Heidegger, must not deny its own 'presuppositions', but rather elaborate them together with that for which they are presuppositions (SZ 310), then it seems legitimate to examine whether, and to what extent, such an idea may be brought to bear upon the author of *Being and Time* himself.

If authentic existence consists in retrieving a historical heritage, then the philosopher's activity as one possible human activity, one way among others to relate oneself to the world, is authentic insofar as it aims at retrieving his own historical heritage – that is, the tradition of philosophy itself. It is easy to see that *Being and Time* should be understood from its very first pages in terms of an explicit attempt at bringing back the most original of all the traditions of philosophy, that is, the Being-question. (This retrieval of ontology – the latter being at the time a 'condemned term' (SD 47) – is also a retrieval of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.)<sup>20</sup> *Being and Time* tries to retrieve, to revive, the Being-question (or since the question itself has long sunk into oblivion, 'awaken' an understanding of its meaning (SZ 1)) by inquiring into the horizon of traditional philosophies' access to Being (time, presence), and by showing this access to be rooted in and dependent upon *Dasein*'s theoretical comportment. Authentic retrieval is, therefore, not a blind attachment to the tradition, but rather the unfolding of a horizon within which the re-appropriation of traditional concepts becomes possible; the ontological transformation of phenomenology claims to be nothing less than 'the retrieval . . . of the origins of our scientific philosophy' (cf. GA 20: 184, 187f.). When the early Heidegger speaks of the oblivion of the Being-question, of the forgottenness of being, what he has in mind is not the claim that the history of philosophy has completely ignored this most original of all its questions, but rather the contention that the tradition blindly took over and tied itself to the Greeks, taking up their concepts and then building them into petrified systems. These concepts were conserved and dragged along through the centuries without any effort at an original re-appropriation or renewal – concepts whose roots in lived experience (from which they once emerged) have indeed long withered away. The 'destruction' proclaimed by Heidegger does not propose to

set the tradition aside, to rule it out, but rather to re-appropriate it into a conceptual framework able to respond to today's lived experience.<sup>21</sup>

A retrieval or revival of the tradition must go back as far as the Greeks because the perspective of modern philosophy appears, taken by itself, rootless. Heidegger does not see modern philosophy as having brought about a decisive change or development, for its basic concepts are wholly penetrated by the structural elements of the traditional Greek-Christian outlook – an outlook that itself had by then become rootless (see e.g., *SZ* 22, 93, 96; *GA* 20: 179; *GA* 21: 13; *GA* 29/30: 52f., 64). These 'presuppositions' underlying Heidegger's access to the history of philosophy, and his fundamental problem, are hardly conceivable without resting upon his direct experience of the ever more intensifying crisis of European culture and civilization.<sup>22</sup> The initial contention of *Being and Time* that traditional metaphysical concepts of man like 'subject', 'ego', 'reason', 'spirit', and 'person' are ontologically unthematized and thus obscure (*SZ* 22) implies that these concepts have become vacant for everyday life, worn out and empty. Indeed, the concept of an 'ideal subject', characteristic of transcendently oriented epistemologies, is, as Heidegger unequivocally says later in the book, a '*phantastically idealized* subject'. Such a subject fails to do justice to nothing less than the 'a priori' of the "factual" subject', that is, *Dasein* (*SZ* 229).<sup>23</sup> We are not, to be sure, provided with anything that might properly be called Heidegger's 'criticism of society'. Nevertheless, his occasional remarks, in the course of lectures, about the culture and philosophy of the age – remarks often amounting to informal quips – are very effective. It is worthwhile to dwell upon them in some detail.<sup>24</sup>

### II.iii

First of all, as far as developments in German culture and philosophy during the second half of the nineteenth century are concerned, Heidegger is highly critical of the epistemological-*wissenschaftstheoretisch* turn typified by neo-Kantianism, considering it to be a sign of going astray, of perplexity and, in a sense, even of decadence (see *GA* 20: 17f., 20f.). The same judgment is expressed in even stronger terms during his debate with Cassirer in Davos, when he remarks that the genesis of neo-Kantianism is to be sought only 'in the perplexity of philosophy concerning the question of what it properly is that in the whole of knowledge has been left for it' (*KPM* 246). After the human and natural sciences, around 1850, had monopolized the totality of what can be known (*die Allheit des Erkennbaren*), all that was left for philosophy was knowledge of science, not of beings. Neo-Kantianism then re-interpreted Kant too, transforming him into an epistemologist of the mathematical-physical sciences, and 'between 1900 and 1910 Husserl himself in a certain sense fell victim to Neo-Kantianism' (*KPM* 247). The breakdown of German

Idealism is considered by Heidegger to be an undisputable fact; but, as he puts it in 1935, the very expression 'breakdown' (*Zusammenbruch*) amounts to a kind of shield, behind which the rise of superficiality (*die schon anbrechende Geistlosigkeit*) and the dissolution of the original spiritual forces are taking shelter. For it is not so much German Idealism that broke down, but rather it was the age that was no more able to be equal to the greatness and originality of its predecessors' achievements (*EM* 34f.; see also *GA* 32: 57; *SA* 7).

The following excursus in Heidegger's 1925–6 lectures is characteristic. When neo-Kantianism, taking up Lotze's obscure and incoherent notion of validity (*Geltung*),<sup>25</sup> became a philosophy of values (*Wertphilosophie*),

it was soon discovered that Kant had written three Critiques, which were supposed to have discussed the theoretical, the practical, and the aesthetic attitudes, and to refer respectively to these three kinds of values. Kant had, of course, had something to say about religion too, but unfortunately not in the form of a Critique; nevertheless, religion must also be secured a place within the system, so the value of the 'sacred' was discovered. This, for Windelband, is of course no autonomous value; to put forward a claim of this sort *circa* 1900 would be too risky. As the world, however, has become very religious since the war, and as with international associations of chemists and meteorologists, even world congresses are being organized, one might now run the risk of claiming that religion is also a value. Or, since it is impossible to leave it at that (the insights presumably grow deeper and deeper), one must say that God is also a value, and, for that matter the highest one. The latter thesis is an obvious blasphemy, surely not mitigated by the fact that theologians assert it as an utmost truth. All this would be highly comical, were it not deeply sad, showing as it does that philosophy no longer reflects upon the things and problems themselves [*man nicht mehr aus den Sachen philosophiert*], but upon the books of colleagues.<sup>26</sup>

It is not difficult to see that this cultural decadence and shallowness affected Heidegger deeply. Someone committed to the appropriation and creative transformation of the problems of the philosophical tradition would naturally be repelled by the 'self-conceited modernity, fallen into barbarity', which pretends that Plato's questions 'are settled' once for all (*GA* 24: 157; see also *GA* 29/30: 48). Husserl had already complained about 'the sort of pseudo-philosophical literature [*philosophische Scheinliteratur*] . . . which nowadays pullulates so abundantly' (Husserl 1965: 47). He had also described the extent to which the social changes taking place in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, and

the consequent prevalence of positivistic culture, were transforming the framework of academic life:

The natural science departments of the philosophical faculties – he wrote in 1910 – are now very persistent in their efforts to acquire professorships in philosophy for researchers who may perhaps be very eminent in their own fields, but have no more sense of philosophy than, say, chemists or physicists.

(Husserl 1965: 47)

The idea of renewing philosophy emerged in connection with considerations pertaining to *Weltanschauung* as early as Heidegger's *Habilitationschrift* (cf. *GA* 1: 406ff.). Although the term 'Weltanschauung', because of abuse made of it at that time, does not turn up in his vocabulary,<sup>27</sup> it is clear that, from the 1920s onward, his retrieval and reformulation of the Being-question acquired its specific outlines against the background of more or less explicit expectations of a social-spiritual regeneration. Husserl's observations had shown the extent to which the development of science and philosophy cannot be viewed as a simple linear unfolding of their allegedly intrinsic character and potentialities, but is, instead, dependent upon extrinsic circumstances, rooted in the historical-intellectual climate of the age. Heidegger, much more susceptible to the central importance of historicity than Husserl, had already remarked in the 1920s: 'each philosophy and each science has its own destiny, and it would be petty-minded (*kleinlich und bürgerlich*) to think that we can abstract from the conditions which direct the questions . . . of philosophy' (*GA* 21: 53; see also 280 and *GA* 20: 182). Awakening the Being-question in an attempt to retrieve the philosophical tradition and to clarify the meaning of the question itself was however just a preparatory step, and Heidegger was very early aware of its limited (finite) possibilities.

In the inaugural lecture at Freiburg in 1929 Heidegger explicitly formulated his view of the situation of the sciences:

The fields of the sciences lie far apart. Their ways of treating their objects are fundamentally different. This disintegrated multiplicity of disciplines is held together only by the technical organization of universities and faculties, and through the practical direction of the disciplines. . . . The roots of the sciences in their essential ground have, however, withered away.

(*WM* in *GA* 9: 104)

*II.iv*

Heidegger's taking over the rectorate in 1933 must thus be seen as connected to his hope of finding a way out of the spiritual decadence, the deep crisis convulsing the whole country. (It may be sufficient to think of the economic crisis between 1929 and 1932, and of the masses of unemployed whose number increased from two to six million during these years). He hoped for a popular-national revival, perhaps giving rise to a philosophical renewal, that of the Being-question. Such a renewal would open up a new historical epoch, no longer characterized by the forgottenness of being. Was not such a hope unfounded, and indeed illusory? This (slightly pedantic) question – to adopt a Heideggerian phrase – arrives too late. That certain features of the renewal were from the very beginning critically assessed by Heidegger is, as will immediately be seen, beyond doubt. As soon as these features gain momentum and prove to have the upper hand, Heidegger will resign, and finally pass into opposition.<sup>28</sup>

For many different sorts of intellectuals who had been critical of developments in Germany during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – such as the malignant growth of industrial-technological civilization, the springing into being of big cities with their slums, as well as the growing commercialization, fragmentation, and instrumentalization of science and culture – the idea of 'national socialism' was pregnant with significance.<sup>29</sup> Since Germany's decadence could well be seen partly as a result of its being fitted into 'international capitalism', the structure created in Europe by the Versailles pact (the source of a continuous sense of national humiliation in Germany), the attempt to find a national solution of the crisis was coupled, for good reasons, with strong anticapitalist feelings. 'If Heidegger' – writes Bernard Willms –

had made more public his political attitude before 1933 . . . he would sooner and more unambiguously have been considered as a representative of the kind of thinking which may be defined as that of the 'Conservative revolution'. . . . This reference to the 'Conservative revolution' is of course meaningful only if it is taken to mean something different from the 'preparation of National Socialism'. . . . It was no less typical of the 'Conservative revolution' that its representatives, for a short time and with hesitation, joined the National Socialists, than that the latter, simultaneously or very soon, pushed them aside, and finally even persecuted them.

(Willms 1977: 17f.)<sup>30</sup>

## II.v

In April 1933, after holding office for less than one week, Rector Wilhelm von Möllendorf, professor of anatomy and a Social Democrat, resigned. Immediately after, he and other colleagues approached Heidegger, urging him to be a candidate in the new election. After some hesitation Heidegger gave his consent to his election – mainly because of the danger that otherwise a functionary would be named rector. One of his first measures as rector, taken a few days after having been elected by the university senate, was to prohibit the hanging of the so-called Jewish poster in the university – a prohibition which, in spite of repeated urgings put through from Berlin, he did not cancel later. He also forbade the book burning planned by Nazi students, seeing to it personally that the University Library remained untouched (cf. Fédier 1966: 899ff.; Allemann 1969: 252f.; Palmier 1968: 74f.; Moehling 1981: 33; *GR* 193ff.; *SUR* 23, 31f.).

These were but defensive steps. As for his constructive ideas, Heidegger repeatedly pointed to the above-quoted passage of his inaugural lecture in 1929 – namely, to his view of the situation of the sciences and the university (see *GR* 196; *SUR* 22). Heidegger's ideas about a cultural renewal, when reconstructed on the basis of his activity as a rector, may be summed up as having centered around the reciprocal coming together of the university (science) and the folk or nation (*Volk*). On the level of concrete measures, as will be seen, they took the form of accommodating students' lives to that of the nation or folk, on the one hand, and attempting to raise the *Volk* to science (university), on the other. But how is the awakening to take place? Who is to direct whom – should science lead the people or vice versa?

Given the premise that the decline of science and philosophy was but a reflection of a general social disintegration ensuing in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, and the idea that even science and philosophy have their own destinies, it is obvious that spiritual life could not be revived from and by itself. A comprehensive social renewal was required. Heidegger was well aware of this, as is shown by his quips connecting neo-Kantianism, and the state of German philosophy in general, to all-encompassing social developments. But there can be no question of the university and the sciences being renewed from 'outside', as it were. For the university would then run the risk of total subjection (a possibility that was to become painfully true later) – a risk that the renewal will *not* be a *spiritual* one. Heidegger's rectorial address treated the theme of the *self-assertion* of the university (a title no other rectorial address bore at the time) because he wanted to actively anticipate the possibility that the reshaping of the university would be determined by social transformations from 'above'. At the same time, he was attempting to re-define and give a new sense to the concept of learning and its role



in social renewal (see *GR* 193, 196, 198; *SUR* 25f.; Moehling 1981: 33). Inconceivable as the renewal of the university may be without an overall social awakening, still, the renewing of the university must nevertheless be carried through and achieved by the university itself – specifically, by way of a radical rethinking of its essence and tasks, a reappropriation and a retrieval of the original meaning of science and of its vocation. Were *that* to come about, science would have been re-united with and accommodated to the nation's life, not by some external force, but by itself (for as we know from *Being and Time*, science is but one of man's modes of being, and not the primary one (cf. *SZ* 11; *SU* 7). It is thus no mere accident – although it might well have seemed somewhat strange at the moment – that Heidegger should have begun his rectorial address in May with an analysis of the notion of science, and that, after tracing it back to the Greeks, should have linked it to the historical destiny of a people, claiming: 'a spiritual world alone is the guarantee of the greatness of the people' (*SU* 13).<sup>31</sup>

A new aspect of the notion of retrieval thus comes to the fore. The Being-question, the original meaning of philosophy. Heidegger says at the beginning of his address, was rooted in the Greek people's historical-national existence (*Dasein*); science was not for them a so-called cultural good, nor was it pure contemplation, that is, 'theory' conceived in opposition to 'praxis'. On the contrary, it was 'the highest realization of authentic praxis', a force encompassing the whole of their existence as a state and as a folk (cf. *SU* 9f.). If science was the Greeks' original mode of being, toward which all their efforts pointed, then it is very much a question of retrieving *that* world, of '*re-cuperating* [wieder-holen] the origin of our historical spiritual *Dasein*' (*EM* 29).<sup>32</sup>

But how is the relation between leaders and followers within the university to be reshaped, once the university re-appropriated its original essence? What are the implications of the retrieval of the original notion of science? What difference will its rootedness in the historical-spiritual world of the people make for the task, mission, and internal life of the university? When we hear Heidegger saying at one point that 'the much celebrated "academic freedom" is driven out of the German university' (a statement that was to raise no little astonishment in decades to come), we should be aware of the precise context of this statement. The essence of the university, Heidegger says at the beginning of the address, is usually found in its 'self-direction', but that is a purely formal way of putting the matter. If 'self-direction' is taken to mean simply exemption from external influences and interventions, there will be a danger of increasing isolation, fragmentation, and disintegration. This would compromise the very notion of science, for, pushing this logic to its extremes, science is no longer science if any one university, faculty, or individual scholar can pursue, as it were, a science all on its (or his)

own. If one calls an arrangement for the interconnection of the various disciplines (Fachwissenschaften) a 'university' – Heidegger says in 1935 – then 'university' becomes an empty name. 'It no longer signifies a primordially unificatory and authoritative spiritual force' (EM 37). Such putative self-direction can be seen, in the light of Heidegger's diagnosis of Germany's spiritual decline, to be no more than 'the *Verkapselung* of the sciences into isolated branches [Fächer]',<sup>33</sup> 'an unhindered and senseless dispersion' (SU 12), a boundless activity of research which – as he formulates it in another lecture – 'hid its own uncertainty under [the mask of] the idea of an [alleged] international progress of sciences' (Schneeberger 1962: 74). If this 'much celebrated "academic freedom"' is now rejected by Heidegger, the reason is given by the words immediately following, namely, that 'being merely negative, this freedom was inauthentic', because 'it meant predominantly lack of concern, arbitrariness of aims and inclinations, licence [Ungebundenheit] in acting and not acting' (SU 15; see also GR 196).<sup>34</sup>

Heidegger, however, as we have seen, is concerned with retaining the idea of a university's self-direction, and with doing so precisely by attempting to explore its deeper dimensions. A closer reflection upon the idea of self-direction, that is, of autonomy, freedom, shows it to mean 'giving the law to oneself' – a very Kantian view. The university is, accordingly, 'the place of spiritual legislation' (SU 15, 21).<sup>35</sup> If self-direction is possible only on the basis of reflection upon or awareness of what one is (Selbstbesinnung, SU 6), and if science's gaining awareness of itself consists in retrieving its original sense, meaning, and roots, by committing itself to shaping and reshaping the spiritual world of a people, then the task of the university cannot be confined to a 'dull and quick schooling [of the students] for an "elegant" profession' (SU 16). Such a conception of the university's task is, in Heidegger's eyes, the correlate of an otherwise unconstrained academic freedom; both are interpretations of the university imposed upon it from 'outside'. The university may not aim at providing whatever specialized professional training may be asked for. Rather, it is because the different professions of 'the statesman and the teacher, the physician and the judge, the priest and the architect lead and guard the existence of the people as a state [das volklich-staatliche Dasein]' that education in these professions is the task of the university. That the university is to shape the spiritual world of a people cannot imply domination over the nation, but rather that those educated and released by it will take care of and enrich the whole people's knowledge of its *Dasein* (SU 17).

The relation of leaders and followers is described by Heidegger in terms of *authentic existence*. Self-direction (Selbstverwaltung) based upon prior awareness of one's self (Selbstbesinnung) presupposes *resoluteness*, and the latter presupposes autonomy. What matters in leadership is not

so much the will to lead the way (Vorangehen) as the strength to walk alone (Alleingehenkönnen) (SU 14). The leaders should concede autonomous initiatives to the followers, and, conversely, the latter should not blindly yield to the leaders. 'Every following carries resistance with it. This essential tension inherent in leading and following must not be obscured, let alone eliminated' (SU 21; cf. De Waele 1947: 119; Harries 1976: 654; Guzzoni 1986: 76f.). Only thus will self-awareness be turned by self-assertion into authentic self-direction (SU 21).

Autonomy, as giving the law to oneself, is for Heidegger not so much obedience to the authority of pure reason, unaffected by sensibility, as it is rootedness in an effort to retrieve a historical heritage freely and resolutely assumed. If science for the Greeks meant taking a stand in the midst of beings which are constantly hiding themselves, this persistence is nevertheless well aware of its powerlessness in face of destiny. Indeed, this amounts to what may be called the 'creative powerlessness of knowledge' (SU 9f.).<sup>36</sup> For resoluteness, striving for the retrieval of the tradition, the future is open and indefinite. Taking over a heritage can never be compelled, but only free.<sup>37</sup> It is never unconditionally necessary that science as such should *be* at all, Heidegger says at the beginning of the address. In his conclusion he restates the same point. It is up to us, he says there, whether and how intensely we dedicate ourselves to the work of the renewal, whether we commit ourselves entirely to it, or merely change old rules and measures, replacing them by new ones. Nobody will prevent us from doing the latter. But neither will anybody ask about our approval or disapproval, if Western culture, well on its way to decline, ultimately collapses, thereby sweeping everything into confusion and madness. Whether that will come about or not is solely a question of whether we as a historical-spiritual people still want to be ourselves – but the young forces of our people have already taken their decision. 'The greatness and splendor of the renewal', he says in the last words of the address, 'will however be fully understood only if we assume that . . . soberness which the old Greek wisdom expressed this way: "Every greatness stands in the storm" ' (SU 21f.; Plato, *The Republic*, 497d, 9).<sup>38</sup>

## II.vi

The rectorial address may, in the last analysis, be seen as a dramatic call for the rescue of a declining culture, for the building up of a new spiritual world. However, not only the concluding words, but also the remarks about the powerlessness of knowledge warned against an ardent zeal and excessive enthusiasm. The breakdown of a culture makes the building up of a new world no more than possible – and *that* requires long and patient work. If the Greeks needed three centuries – Heidegger significantly said – in order merely to formulate meaningfully the very

question of what knowledge was, then we must not expect the complete clarification and realization of the German university to be carried out during the present or the following semester (*SU* 19f.). That Heidegger entertained few illusions about the tempo of the renewal becomes clear from a remark of his, made during the 1925/6 semester. Aristotle's logic has but one single child of the same rank, Hegel's, Heidegger said. No other descendants are possible; what is required is a new species.

When that species will come into existence cannot be known, but we, men of today, are certainly not of that species . . . our efforts may only be directed toward effecting the transition: what we can do [here Heidegger changes his tone] is no more than making the past alive for a future for which we yearn, but we shall not reach.

(*GA* 21: 14)

In keeping with his claim that real progress in science and philosophy is brought about only in and by a revision of fundamental concepts, a change in our access to the object or area of research,<sup>39</sup> Heidegger envisaged the renewal of the metaphysical tradition, the new elaboration of the Being-question, as attainable only after a laborious and careful re-appropriation of the basic metaphysical concepts of Western philosophy. (The previous quotation may help explain why external pressure was needed to make Heidegger publish *Being and Time*.)<sup>40</sup> So it is no accident that he saw European culture and civilization, the development of which had underlain the unfolding of Western philosophy and which was now in a deep crisis, as something not to be renewed overnight.

Heidegger's recognition that the renewal, both of the philosophical tradition and of the social-national framework, is a long process requiring the refoundation of the bases may shed new light upon a statement he made in his debate with Cassirer in Davos – a statement which has an odd ring: 'philosophy has the task . . . to push man back into the hardness of his destiny' (*KPM* 263; see also *GA* 29/30: 248). And if in his lectures in 1935 Heidegger once more emphasizes that 'philosophy, according to its essence, never makes things easier, but only harder' (*EM* 9), his underlying view is not a gloomy pessimism, but rather the conviction that the recovery from the decline, the creation of a new world, is dependent primarily upon a full and inexorable awareness of the extent, depth, and scope of the crisis. To suggest quick and random solutions is to mask the real character of the crisis. If the *Selbstbesinnung* remains blocked half-way, only pseudo-solutions will emerge, thus deepening the crisis even further.<sup>41</sup>

Given that his critical appraisal of *international* liberalism and its culture had left Heidegger susceptible to the idea of *national* socialism, does it follow that he remained insensitive to the condition of other nations,

or that he thought Europe's spiritual reorganization should be performed under German hegemony? That Heidegger approved of Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations in November 1933 cannot, in the light of what we have said above, be a surprise. But it is important that in the very address in which he defended this step he emphasized:

Our will to the self-responsibility of the nation [völkische Selbstverantwortung] wills that each nation [Volk] shall find and guard the greatness and truth of its own determination. This will is the highest guarantee for peace among the nations, for it is tied to the fundamental law of manly respect and unconditional honor.

(Schneeberger 1962: 150)

And in another address he put it even more clearly: 'The will to build a genuine community of nations [Völkergemeinschaft] is equally far from the desire for a lame and unconcerned world-fraternity [Weltverbrüderung] and from the desire for a blind despotism. That will is operative at a higher level than this contrast' (Schneeberger 1962: 145).<sup>42</sup>

Further, in 1937, long after he had detached himself from political developments in Germany and had retreated from public activity into inner emigration and nearly complete silence, he once again took up this theme – presumably because of the ever more aggressive and military character which nazism had adopted. 'A genuine reciprocal understanding between the nations', he wrote, 'may be achieved only in that creative dialogue in which each nation commits itself to gaining full awareness of its historical endowments and of the possibilities that history assigns it.' The rescue of European culture may be carried out only if each nation gathers itself unto a responsibility for its own historical traditions and heritage. Renewal must be effected by each nation one by one. 'Understanding in the genuine sense is possible only . . . through acknowledgment of what belongs properly to the other from out of an all-encompassing necessity' – its traditions and tasks. 'Genuine reciprocal understanding is not reciprocal reassurance [Beruhigung]<sup>43</sup> which soon leads to mutual indifference, but rather a constant and intensive questioning of each other [die Unruhe des gegenseitigen Sich-in-die-Frage-Stellens] – a questioning that springs out of concern for common historical tasks. . . . One of the most German thinkers of all, Leibniz', Heidegger observes, 'was inspired throughout his philosophical effort by a confrontation with Descartes.' The renewal of the spiritual world has, from this point of view, two necessary conditions: 'the persistent will to listen to or hear the other, and the resolute fidelity [der verhaltene Mut] to one's own determination' (WA in DE 15ff.). A creative historical commitment – he says in his lectures on Nietzsche in 1936/7 – 'cannot be limited either to particular groups, classes or sects, nor even to particular states and

nations, but must be at least European in scope.' The fact that this commitment must be accomplished by each nation separately does not imply 'separation from the other nations or, still less, their oppression', but rather the rise of the nations through and in a confrontation in which they develop, each by itself, the strength of rising one above the other (*N 1*: 185). The question of who man really is (the main problem of Europe in the present and the next century) 'may only find an answer in an exemplary . . . history-shaping [Geschichtsgestaltung] brought about by the nations competing with each other' (*N 1*: 361).

Heidegger's attempt at an original renewal of the essence of the university, or science, trying to tie these to and root them in a people's historical existence, was only one aspect of his activity. On the level of concrete measures, as we have said, there was the problem, not only of reconciling the students with, and making them participate in, the life and work of the people, but also, and of equal importance, of raising the people up to science. The program of national awakening included the project of procuring the unemployed not only work but also education. So we should look at the address that Heidegger gave to several hundred unemployed people who had been admitted to Freiburg University.

Heidegger spoke as rector in the assembly hall of the university. His speech starts out from the thesis that the end of unemployment should not be understood purely as the fact that one has now finally a job to do and is able to improve one's conditions of living. One should view it also as entering into the national community. Those given a job now belong to the whole of the nation, and are molding its future. It is from out of this lived experience that the formerly unemployed are supposed to recover their dignity *for themselves*, as well as appropriate security and resoluteness in relating themselves *to others*. Supplying with work is also supplying with knowledge [Arbeitsbeschaffung, Wissenbeschaffung]. If younger colleagues are ready now to transmit knowledge, Heidegger points out, it is not as 'learned' men belonging to the 'upper' classes, or as 'educated' people over against a stratum (a 'lower stratum') of the 'uneducated'. Rather, they do so as comrades, as members of the same national community (Schneeberger 1962: 200). The new common will is directed toward bridging the gap between manual and intellectual workers, and this bridge building (Brückenschlagen) is today no mere illusion.<sup>44</sup> For science is, he goes on to say, not the privileged property of the bourgeoisie to be utilized for the exploitation of the laboring people. Rather, it is a more rigorous and more responsible form of that knowledge which the whole German nation requires and seeks for its historical-national existence (assuming that this nation is to secure and guard its life and greatness at all). 'Knowledge had by genuine science is essentially no different from knowledge had by peasants, woodmen,

navvies, miners. . . . For to know means: *to know one's way* [sich auskennen] in the world, in which we all and each find ourselves'; to know means to master the situation, to be equal to it, to come up to the task. 'We do not make a distinction between those "educated" and those "uneducated" . . . not because there is no difference, but because our evaluation does not depend upon this distinction. Genuine knowledge is possessed by the peasant and the manual worker, each in his own way and in his own field.' A learned man may, for all his learning, go astray with his pseudo-knowledge (Scheinwissen). Not only the concept of science, but also that of labor is to be transformed. Spiritual labor is not exclusively that done by scholars: 'every labor *as* labor is something spiritual', for it is based upon competence, freely appropriated skills, and an intelligent understanding of the rules to come by – that is, upon authentic knowledge. The performance of the navvy is fundamentally no less spiritual than the achievement of the scholar. There is no real contrast between the 'workers' and those having knowledge peculiar to the sciences. 'Every worker, each in his own way, is a knower, and it is as a knower that he can work at all' (Schneeberger 1962: 201f.). Such an understanding of knowledge and of labor is the condition of the possibility of a 'bridge building' which is no longer extrinsic and artificial.<sup>45</sup>

## *II.vii*

It was thus within the framework of a general spiritual awakening that the National Socialist revolution was meaningful for Heidegger. What mattered was not to 'politicize' science and university but rather to lend spiritual content to society and politics – that is, to help shape an already existing movement, a movement born out of crisis, into a force capable of creating a genuine spiritual world.<sup>46</sup> Insofar as a renewal basing itself upon self-awareness presupposes resolute retrieval of and rootedness in one's own being, such a renewal is opposed to a radical subversion of factual conditions. (Philosophy, it may be remembered, has precisely the task of pushing men back into the hardness of their destiny). The universities' gaining awareness of their original meaning and mission by bringing themselves back to the national-historical community does not, therefore, imply in the least that the universities should, as it were, 'march into' the sphere of politics, taking over the role of the politicians. This mistake would lead, indirectly, to the same 'politicizing' of the university against which its *self-assertion* had tried to defend it. Its own 'political' function may be performed by the university only *as* university, that is, as a given, bounded domain within the national-historical community.<sup>47</sup> These considerations, which are in keeping with the main line of thought found in *Being and Time*, and with Heidegger's whole outlook, may account for the fact that Heidegger wanted to partake in the revival precisely

from his own place. He did not desire to assume another, perhaps higher, position.

He might, however, have had a chance to do so. In September 1933, as the German press of the day reported in detail, Heidegger was offered the chair of philosophy at the University of Berlin, upon an initiative of the Prussian minister of culture. Scarcely one month later, the Bavarian minister of culture invited him to accept the premier chair of philosophy at the University of Munich. In neither of the cases did the newspapers leave much doubt that the calls carried no little political weight with them.<sup>48</sup> However, Heidegger refused both calls. The reasons for his refusal are made explicit, and put in a particular light, in a radio lecture Heidegger gave in the autumn of 1933 – a lecture bearing the title ‘Why do we stay in the provinces?’ It offers no plausible arguments, but, once again, a meditation.

On the steep slope of a wide mountain valley in the Southern Black Forest [Heidegger begins the lecture] there stands a small ski hut; scattered throughout the base of the valley lie farmhouses, higher up the slope the meadows lead to woods with fir trees. This is my world. When the young farmboy drags his heavy sledge up the slope and guides it, piled high with beech logs, down to his house, when the herdsman drives his cattle up the slope, when the farmer in his shed gets the shingles ready for his roof, my work is of the same sort. A city-dweller thinks that in condescending to have a longer conversation with a peasant, he has gone ‘out among the people’. But when in the evening during a work-break I sit with the peasants at the chimney-corner, we mostly do not speak at all. We just smoke our pipes in silence. City-dwellers are ‘livened up’ by a so-called ‘outing in the country’. My work is however sustained and guided by the world of the mountains and peasants – a work of which I am not at all the master. City-dwellers are often amazed by such long monotonous periods of loneliness. But in large cities one can easily be lonelier than anywhere else. In the public world one can be made a ‘celebrity’ overnight by the newspapers and journals. That is the surest way to have one’s intentions misinterpreted and quickly forgotten. In contrast, the memory of the peasant has its simple fidelity which never forgets. Recently an old peasant woman died up there. She used to chat with me frequently, telling me many old stories of the village. Even in the past year, with her eighty-three years, she would still come climbing up the slope to see whether I was still there or whether ‘someone’ had stolen me off. The night of her death, not long before the end, she sent one more greeting to the ‘Professor’. Such a memory is worth incomparably more than the most astute ‘report’ of any international newspaper about my alleged philosophy. – Lately a very loud and



active obtrusiveness has been emerging, passing itself off as a concern for the world of the peasant. Men of letters chatter about 'folk-character' and 'rootedness in the soil'. What the peasant wants is however no such citified officiousness, but solely quiet reserve with regard to his own way of being. – Recently I got a second invitation to teach at the University of Berlin. On that occasion I left the city, and withdrew to the hut, where I listened to what the mountains, the forests and the farmlands were saying. I went to see my old friend, a seventy-five-year-old peasant. What would he say? He had read about the call in the newspapers. Slowly he fixed the sure gaze of his eyes on mine. Keeping his mouth tightly shut, he thoughtfully put his hand on my shoulder – and ever so slightly shook his head. That means: inexorably no!<sup>49</sup>

## *II.viii*

The hope for a spiritual reorganization of the nation, for the university's self-renewal and for its becoming rooted in an organic national community was soon to become untenable, thanks to the ever faster and wilder politicization of the society, the conversion of efforts to control the anarchy into those making for a totalitarian system, and the consequent solidification of a state-ideology, namely, racism. In the second half of 1933 Heidegger was already facing increasing difficulties. His ideas concerning renewal met pronounced resistance on the part of both 'the old' and 'the new'. The 'new' was represented by the idea of 'politicized' science – an idea that Heidegger looked upon as a falsification of the essence of truth. The 'old', by contrast, was the idea that everybody should be concerned with his own discipline and its progress – thereby dismissing general philosophical reflection upon fundamentals as mere 'abstraction', or admitting them as, at best, extrinsic ornaments (cf. *SUR* 22f.; *GR* 196).

In the winter semester of 1933/4 Heidegger intended to nominate outstanding young scholars as deans of the faculties, without any regard to their relation to the Nazi party (cf. *GR* 201; *SUR* 35).<sup>50</sup> By Christmas it had become clear that his planned renewal could not be carried through. Within the university there emerged objections to his idea of introducing students into responsible positions in the administration of the university. At the 'Todtnauberg camp', held by Heidegger to discuss impending tasks for the winter semester and to explain his ideas about science and about the university, some government functionaries, as well as some visitors from Heidelberg, introduced the theme of racial thought, thereby attempting to exercise pressure upon Heidegger and upon Freiburg University. In October 1933 the German rectors held a conference in Berlin to establish the new legal framework for subordinating the universities to the state. Freiburg University boycotted this conference:

Heidegger did not go, nor did he send a representative. In February 1934 Heidegger was called to Karlsruhe by the minister, who demanded that he dismiss, and replace with colleagues more acceptable to the party, Wilhelm von Möllendorf, dean of the Faculty of Medicine, and Erik Wolf, dean of the Faculty of Law. Heidegger refused the request, and offered his resignation, should the minister persist in his demand. This is precisely what happened. At the end of the winter semester 1933/4 Heidegger resigned. He tendered his resignation about a year after assuming office, and several months before the concentration of all power, subsequent to the death of President Hindenburg in August, in the hands of Hitler.<sup>51</sup>

In 1934 the orthodox Nazis started an open attack against the 'Jacobinical', plebeian wing of national socialism. At the end of June Hitler destroyed the faction of the party which was demanding fulfillment of its social promises. There would be no more talk about the 'spiritual revolution' of the workers, no more use of other ideas inspired by German Idealism. Their place would inexorably be taken over by a concept of the people defined in terms of race. By the time this new course prevailed, Heidegger had withdrawn from the movement.<sup>52</sup>

The certainty peculiar to resoluteness – we read in *Being and Time* – must open itself to what is disclosed in resolution. That means: it may not stiffen itself in the situation, but should rather keep itself open for the possible, and indeed from time to time necessary, re-appropriation of itself. Resoluteness as fidelity to one's self, as destiny, is freedom for the *giving up* of a particular resolution – a giving up required by the possible situation (SZ 307f., 391).

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### Notes

1 Cf. GA 1: 186f., 406, 410f. Heidegger's reading, at the age of eighteen, of Brentano's dissertation *Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles* may be considered to be the first and decisive incitement to formulate the Being-question. Cf. his Preface to Richardson 1963: xi; and GA 1: 56.

2 'The constant sharpening of the knife', Heidegger quotes significantly Lotze in his *Habilitationsschrift*, 'is boring if one has nothing to cut with it' (GA 1:

200). In a review written in 1912 on recent developments in logic, Heidegger even mentions Russell and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica* (see GA 1: 42).

3 Cf. SD 87. For the presence of Aristotle in the formation of the young Heidegger's thought see Sheehan 1975, and Volpi 1984b, chapters 1-3.

4 An example may be the *Habilitationsschrift* itself, in which Husserlian phenomenology is utilized to illuminate, and thus show the theoretical significance of, Scotus's thought – an accomplishment which enables Heidegger, conversely, to situate Husserlian phenomenology historically as a continuation of a traditional problematic.

5 To pose and elaborate (work out) a question means for Heidegger primordially to clarify the prior ground or horizon which lends meaning to the terms in question. To put it roughly, so as to be able to answer any question, we must have already understood its meaning (to the question, e.g., 'What color is the table?' the answer: 'Square' would fail to understand the *direction* of the question); that is, any question implies or carries with itself a pre-conceptual or – as Heidegger puts it – 'pre-ontological' understanding of its meaning. We are able to *take up* the Being-question, J. Sallis comments upon the first paragraphs of *Sein und Zeit*, 'only to the extent that we can *pose* it; to pose it appropriately . . . is to let the structure which belongs to the question unfold from the question itself' (Sallis 1978: 28f.). See SZ par. 2, 32; Gadamer 1975: 250ff.; Herrmann 1987: 51ff.

6 The metaphysic-ladenness of epistemological or logical theories is, however, of a peculiar sort – one which those moving within the theory cannot become aware of. Incapable of being thematized, it is not susceptible of critical discussion or examination. See e.g., Heidegger's discussion of the latent, 'dogmatic' metaphysical presuppositions inherent in Husserlian phenomenology (GA 20: 140ff., in particular 147, 155, 158, 178). Concerning Heidegger's confrontation with Husserl, see Volpi, 1984a; for the concept of phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger see Herrmann 1981, in particular, 37ff.

7 Cf. GA 20: 200f.; GA 24: 103f., 154f., 172, 444; GA 25: 167; GA 26: 19ff., 109; SZ 154, 183, 212; later e.g., EM 78. In Heidegger's perspective it is no mere accident that Hegel's ontology, as the offspring of a long development, is symptomatically called *Logic* (cf. GA 25: 167; see also GA 21: 311).

8 For Heidegger's discussion of the logic of questioning in his dissertation, see GA 1: 160.

9 I borrow the term 'anti-metaphysical' from Otto Pöggeler (1963: 28).

10 Existential analytic might be seen as a polemic radicalization of Kant's replacement for traditional ontology, namely, a transcendental analytic of the pure intellect ('blosse Analytik des reinen Verstandes': *Critique of Pure Reason* A 304 = B 247). Heidegger, writes Richardson, 'shifts the emphasis from an investigation of man's reason . . . to an investigation of man in his totality' (Richardson 1963: 31).

11 Existential analytic, so conceived, is not anthropology. For to elaborate a theory of man as one being among others already presupposes a prior clarification of the different domains of Being – a task not to be accomplished until after the Being-question is answered; cf. SZ 17, 45ff.; KPM 202ff., 227.

12 The term used by Heidegger for man is *Dasein*, which will be left untranslated in the text. The reason why Heidegger does not use the term 'man' is, negatively, that this term is laden with traditional metaphysical presuppositions, suggesting as it does a 'rational animal', a being 'endowed with reason' (a conception Heidegger intends to criticize). The positive reason is that man, for Heidegger, has an intrinsic relation to *Sein*, and possesses a pre-conceptual

understanding of Being. Man is indeed the very being which poses the Being-question. The term *Dasein* is apt to suggest all these connections with *Sein*. Concerning the term *Dasein* see King 1964: 65ff.; Richardson 1963: 44ff.; W. Marx 1961: 209ff.; Fell 1979: 31f.; Pöggeler 1983: 93; Biemel 1978: 111ff.

13 'Das Ganze eines Begründungszusammenhanges wahrer Sätze' (SZ 11). For the term 'Begründungszusammenhang' see Husserl 1980. What Husserl means by this central term of his *Wissenschaftslehre* is that *Wissenschaft* (as opposed to mere *Wissen*) consists not only in one's *knowing* particular perceptions, or having isolated knowing acts. Rather, it requires, if it is to be worthy of its name, some 'systematic connection in theoretical sense', that is, 'the founding of knowledge' (Begründung des Wissens) (cf. Husserl 1980: 15, 230ff.).

14 Concerning parallels between Heidegger's ontological refutation of the epistemological standpoint and the perspective of German Idealism see Gadamer 1976: 140f.

15 Heidegger's argument may be seen as amounting to a kind of 'refutation of skepticism'. Insofar as it shows that some prior knowledge must by necessity precede or underlie all sorts of doubt, rendering doubt possible, his strategy is analogous to that of the later Wittgenstein (see Wittgenstein 1984: 141, 143 (pars. 105, 111)).

16 This may be one of the reasons why Heidegger rejects the application of traditional categories to man (e.g., 'subject', 'ego', 'reason', 'spirit', etc.; see SZ 22). One can say, Gadamer writes, that 'it is *Dasein's* inauthenticity from which metaphysics as the ontology of *Vorhandensein* developed itself' (Gadamer 1985: 19).

17 Cf. SZ 383f. For the variety of meanings and implications of the term *Wiederholung* see Caputo 1982: 343ff.

18 I should note that some basic issues – above all Heidegger's discussion of truth and time – have been neglected. Also the *vexata questio* of the incompleteness of *Sein und Zeit* cannot be discussed in the present context.

19 Cf. SZ 264, 298. Since finitude is the basic character of *Dasein*, gaining awareness of it by anticipating death helps it become conscious both of what possibilities are uniquely its own (that is, not the others'), and, vice versa, of those possibilities of others which are not – and perhaps necessarily cannot be – its own. Demske rightly speaks in this sense of a 'social aspect' of the anticipation of death (Demske 1963: 38).

20 The term 'Wiederholung' appears as early as the title of the first section ('Die Notwendigkeit einer ausdrücklichen Wiederholung der Frage nach dem Sein': SZ 2; see also KPM 232; Richardson 1963: 93). The notion of 'retrieval' is thus present and operative long before the analyses of authenticity are provided (for this notion in the young Heidegger see GA 61: 80). From another perspective, Heidegger intended to 'retrieve' the whole existential analytic from within the elaborated horizon of the Being-question. Because of the incompleteness of the work, this did not come about. But nevertheless the 'second' Heidegger may pertinently be held to be a retrieval of the 'first' Heidegger (cf. Richardson 1963: 625; Fehér 1984: 146). – All such attempts at retrieval must, however, be conscious of taking their starting points *from within* history (see SZ 20f.). So when Heidegger says in his lectures that his investigations too are determined by the historical situation, and thereby conditioned by traditional philosophies' access (Zugang) to beings (cf. GA 24: 31), this situation both characterizes *extrinsically* the moment of his positing the Being-question and emerges *intrinsically* as one of the main tenets of *Being and Time*: namely, that authenticity is only an existential modification of inauthenticity, always preceded by the latter, and that

*Dasein* can never remain unaffected by inherited everyday opinions (alltägliche Ausgelegtheit). It is in these opinions, for them and against them, that all genuine understanding, interpretation, communication, discourse and re-appropriation take place. It is likewise in them, against them, and at the same time for them, that resolute *Dasein* projects itself upon the chosen possibility (cf. *SZ* 169, 383). This view helps us understand why and how the history of philosophy constitutes an integral part of systematic philosophy.

21 Cf. *GA* 61: 21; *GA* 20: 179, 188; *GA* 21: 13f.; *GA* 26: 101, 196f.; *SZ* 21ff.; *GA* 29/30: 53ff.; *EM* 10. As to 'blind' traditionalism, see his critique of Husserl, his remarks upon Descartes's 'dogmatism', present also in Kant, and his observations on Descartes's own inauthentic traditionalism: *GA* 20: 147; *GA* 21: 291; *GA* 29/30: 30, 64, 84; *GA* 32: 196.

22 The point that the cultural crisis in Europe was felt most intensively in Germany is made in a lively and convincing manner by Gadamer (see Gadamer 1983: 9f.).

23 I do not, of course, wish to claim that in his critique of traditional notions of man, Heidegger did not employ eminently *theoretical* arguments. (Indeed, I attempt to show some of these above). What I do suggest is that, whatever the particular 'psychology of discovery' may have been, the starting intuitions of such a critique must have been provided by factual experience of life. (We do know that one of his early lectures bore the title 'Hermeneutik der Faktizität' [cf. Pöggeler 1963: 29 and the forthcoming *GA* 63; see also Gadamer 1986/7: 16].) Put in another way, the starting point of such a criticism must have been a prior dissatisfaction with commonly accepted notions of man.

24 We may refer first of all to his *Habilitationsschrift*, and in particular to those passages which offer critical reflections on the culture of the day (see *GA* 1: 200, 408f.).

25 Plato is claimed by Lotze to have remained captive to incoherence; however, Heidegger remarks, it is only in his interpreters that Plato turns out to be senseless (*GA* 21: 71).

26 *GA* 21: 83f. (The above passage is a close paraphrase rather than a translation.) – Not only has the Kant literature, he says on another occasion, become more important than Kant himself, but its effect will be that nobody will be able to get access to the thing (*Sache*) (*GA* 32: 41). To appropriate intentionality, he observes on yet another occasion, what one needs is not sharp intelligence (*Scharfsinn*), but only refraining from prejudice, concentration upon and disciplined description of what one has before one's eyes. Objectivity (*Sachlichkeit*) concerning what is evident, he adds, is nevertheless the most difficult thing one can achieve, for man is naturally at home in what is artificial, deceptive, what he picks up from idle talk with others (*GA* 20: 37). Finally, consider one last, interesting, series of observations, made in 1925: 'Today people decide about metaphysics or even higher things at congresses. Nowadays there are conferences to decide every question – that is, people come together, and keep coming together, and everybody expects the other to tell him what to do. If he is not told, it is also of no importance, for what really matters is that one has spoken [hat sich ja nun ausgesprochen]. Though all the speakers may have little understanding of the thing in question, nevertheless it is believed that some understanding *will* finally be derived from the accumulation of non-understanding [Unverstehen]. So there are people today who travel from one conference to the other, and get the feeling that something is really happening, as if they had been really doing something. But in fact they have just relieved themselves from work, and have tried to conceal their own helplessness under the cover of idle talk. . . . So

finally people think that everything is all right, and one should be present at every congress' (GA 20: 376f.). 'It is clear', he adds somewhat later, 'that research and science are also *Dasein's* possibilities, and are, therefore, susceptible to the modifications of *Dasein's* being . . . , and in particular to fallenness . . . : so philosophy contains, always and necessarily, a bit of sophistry' (GA 20: 416f.; see also GA 32: 41).

27 For a critique of the philosophy of *Weltanschauung*, see Husserl 1965, and Heidegger's analogous considerations in GA 24: 5ff., especially 13, and GA 61: 44. For Heidegger, however, the insistence upon 'scientific' philosophy in contrast to the philosophy of *Weltanschauung*, viz., rationalism in contrast to irrationalism, is simply beside the point. Cf. GA 1: 410; SZ 136; EM 136; N 2: 372, 531; BH in GA 9: 349; GA 32: 143; GA 52: 133; SD 79. See also Hogemann 1986/7: 56, 62; Kisiel 1986/7: 106f.; Rodi 1986/7: 168.

28 Heidegger, Karl A. Moehling writes, 'was both attracted to and repelled by Nazism. He was put in what he called a "middle position" of believing in the social and national ideas of the movement while rejecting the essential racism' (Moehling 1981: 36). At that time, Jaspers admits in his notes, 'neither he nor any of us could know what was going to become of it all' (Jaspers 1978: 180). For Adorno's analogous misinterpretation of the situation, see Pöggeler (1985: 28).

29 The idea goes some decades back. The attempt to bring together the two major intellectual trends of the past century, nationalism and socialism, dates as far back as the 1890s. Friedrich Meinecke, the great German historian, shows this convincingly in his memoirs, written immediately after World War II (see Meinecke 1949: 33ff.). There was first of all Friedrich Naumann's attempt, in the early 1890s, to fuse the nationalistic and the socialist trends (the former supported mainly by the middle class, the latter by workers). Naumann tried to quell the hostility between the two classes so as to mitigate the extremely anti-nationalist (that is, internationalistic) faith of the socialists by attending to the workers' material and spiritual needs. Had Naumann's attempt succeeded (an attempt Meinecke calls 'one of the noblest dreams of German history'), Meinecke thinks, Hitler could never have risen to power (Meinecke 1949: 34). It is significant that Naumann's name is mentioned by Heidegger in a positive sense in the *Spiegel*-Interview (GR 196; see also Pöggeler 1988: 27). As to differences between the forms of early national socialism and the subsequent totalitarian regime, see also Palmier 1968: 193; Pöggeler 1983: 392; Pöggeler 1984: 234.

30 Hermann Rauschning, a Conservative and one of the founding members of the Nazi party, who in 1934 went into exile and became a bitter enemy of the regime, spoke in 1938 about the 'National Socialist usurpation' of the idea of the Third Reich. This was originally 'a slogan of the Young Conservatives, the title of a book published in 1922 by Moeller van den Bruck', - an idea which in its author's 'original conception was not a German idea', but 'a political idea of European scope'. 'In spite of its manifest defects', writes Rauschning, 'National Socialism offered opportunities of pursuing initiatives in which the Young Conservatives were interested. . . . Many conservatives . . . found their way into the ranks of National Socialism from the very best of motives and in perfect good faith.' ' . . . ten years before the National Socialist seizure of power, the Young Conservatives of Germany had a home and foreign policy immeasurably superior to that of the present regime of violence, and envisaged Germany's recovery only in connexion with a universal idea of right, with a "European solution". Nothing was more horrifying to the Conservatives than the gradual recognition that the "national rising", with which they had associated themselves to that

end, was in reality a cynical nihilist revolution, the negation of their own ideals.' (Rauschnig 1939: 121, 119, 309; see Stern 1984: 12ff., 18). Heide Gerstenberger characterizes revolutionary Conservatives by the attempt 'to revolutionize spiritually the society [Gesellschaft] by transforming it into a community of the people [Volksgemeinschaft]' (Gerstenberger 1972: 343). That conservative thinkers cannot be taken as simple precursors of nazism is also stressed by Palmier (1968: 172; see also Pöggeler 1974: 109). For a sense of the general historical atmosphere, Alan Bullock's analyses are useful: '1933, like other revolutionary years, produced great hopes, a sense of new possibilities, the end of frustration, the beginning of action, a feeling of exhilaration and anticipation after years of hopelessness. Hitler recognized this mood when he told the German people to hold up their heads and re-discover their old pride and self-confidence. Germany, united and strong, would end the crippling divisions which had held her back, and recover the place that was her due in the world. Many people believed this in 1933 and thought that a new era had begun. Hitler succeeded in releasing pent-up energies in the nation, and in creating a belief in the future of the German people. It is wrong to lay stress only on the element of coercion, and to ignore the degree to which Hitler commanded a genuine popular support in Germany' (Bullock 1952: 253; concerning the last statement, see also Picht's memoir of Felix Jacoby, quoted in note 46, *infra*).

31 It is not without significance that at this point Heidegger makes use of the term *Geist*, which he had primarily put in quotation marks and treated as an ontologically obscure concept. The fact that he takes it up now by re-defining it in terms of his own notion of authenticity ('Spirit is primordially attuned, knowing resolution towards the essence of being' (*SU* 14)) supports the assumption that retrieval of the philosophical tradition was for Heidegger not a merely intellectual project, and that his objections to traditional ontological concepts should be seen in the context of his dissatisfaction with lived experience which was linked to those concepts. 'Heidegger's insistence on the autonomy of the university', writes Karsten Harries, 'challenged those who wanted to make it into a tool of the movement and reduce it to a vocational school, while his emphasis on the spiritual opposed Rosenberg's subordination of spirit to race and biology.' ('For Heidegger', writes Lucien Goldmann, 'anti-semitism must have been but a serious and unfortunate error, for the biological has no place in ontology, and can, therefore, neither limit, nor increase *Dasein's* possibilities of choice between the authentic and the inauthentic.') 'This is not to suggest', Harries goes on, 'that Heidegger's commitment to the Nazis was less than genuine. He appears to have been convinced at the time that in spite of the threat posed by party functionaries and ideologues, the engagement of people like himself could help to shape the Nazi movement in such a way that it would become a force which could rescue Germany from crisis and confusion' (Harries 1976: 653; Goldmann 1973: 78; see also Palmier 1968: 63). 'Fatal though the impression of some Heideggerian texts of the time may be upon us today', writes Hermann Mörchen, 'it is equally remarkable that in those very texts no concessions to anti-semitism can be found' (Mörchen 1981: 254; see also to the same effect Ott 1984b: 122; Pöggeler 1985: 62, 44). Moehling rightly makes the point that the rectorial address 'was a revolutionary appeal in that he argued that the time had come in German history when an examination of the relationship between the university and the nation was not only desirable but an absolute necessity. He urged the re-assertion of the university and learning in the life of the nation so that pressing and urgent spiritual issues could be confronted' (Moehling 1981: 33f.).

32 Heidegger, writes Harries, 'calls for a thinking which, no longer content

with the splintering of science into sciences, will help to establish the "spiritual world" of the German people and thus help to overcome the disintegrating tendencies of the age' (Harries 1976: 654). 'Clearly', writes Moehling, 'Heidegger's thinking in 1933 on learning and the German university demonstrates a serious departure from the Nazis' understanding of the University as a place for training a racial elite subservient to the state' (Moehling 1981: 34; see also Richardson 1963: 257; the title of the rectorial address, as Michael E. Zimmermann points out, was 'a daring title during the time when Hitler expected the universities to submit to what he asserted to be the demand of *das Volk*' (Zimmermann, 1981: 171). Seen in the context of other rectorial addresses of the time, writes Bernd Martin, Heidegger's was an exception; it was not at all in line with what the Nazis had expected (Martin 1986: 52; see also Schmidt 1986: 88). Obviously, this departure could not remain hidden. As Heidegger recorded in his recently published memoir, Minister Wacker immediately let him know his view of the rectorial address. In the minister's judgment, the address represented a sort of 'private National Socialism', which circumvented the perspectives of the party program, failed to be based upon 'racial thought', and rejected the idea of the 'politicized science' (cf. *SUR* 30f.).

33 The expression 'Verkapselung' is applied also technically by Heidegger to denote the 'worldless' subject characteristic of modern philosophy (see *SZ* 62).

34 Heidegger's rejection of 'academic freedom', writes Palmier, is not equivalent to the repudiation of the liberty of teaching or of the expression of thought (cf. Palmier 1968: 83). 'In Heidegger's understanding', Moehling writes, 'academic freedom in the modern age had come to mean academic specialization and the fragmentation of learning into distinct and isolated areas. It was the modern trend towards specialization, relativism, and irrelevancy which molded the university into a corporate entity which took pride in its autonomy but failed to recognize its isolation from the spiritual needs of the nation' (Moehling 1981: 34). That *Gebundenheit* in the positive sense is not synonymous with lack of freedom or subjection is a point made already in Heidegger's *Habilitationsschrift* (cf. *GA* 1: 199; see also *SZ* 122: 'Authentic Verbundenheit alone renders proper objectivity [*Sachlichkeit*] possible'; and *WW* in *GA* 9: 189: 'Freedom is not the *Ungebundenheit des Tun- und Nichttunkönnens*').

35 Concerning the Kantian concept of freedom as *Selbstgesetzgebung* see *GA* 31: 24 (where it is called 'the positive concept of freedom') and *passim*. The notion of the university as 'the place of spiritual legislation' shows many parallels with similar views characteristic of German Idealism (see Moehling 1981: 35). The most relevant text in the writings of German Idealists is perhaps Schelling's *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums* (1802). See Schelling 1977: 251, 254, 257 (Universities are defined here as 'Verbindungen für die Wissenschaften', and Heidegger claims, in like manner, that the commitment to the essence of the university is the commitment to science (*SU* 7: 281f., 284, 299, 304f; see also Fichte 1971: 110)). Here we touch upon a further aspect of the concept of *Wiederholung* – namely, in the sense of a retrieval of German Idealism's understanding of the cultural role of philosophy in the national awakening, and in the nation's life in general (see also Hegel 1970: 402ff.). It must be added that one of Heidegger's constant philosophical concerns was the *essence of the university*: he repeatedly gave lecture courses on it, the first as early as 1919 (see Richardson 1963: 663, 666; Pöggeler 1988: 21f.; see also *GA* 61: 62ff.).

36 See also the remark, quoted in section II.iii, on the destiny of science and philosophy.

37 For a Kantian parallel, cf. Kant 1982: 704.



38 Werner Jäger, who was soon to leave Germany because of his Jewish wife, had the intention of publishing the rectorial address in the review *Die Antike*, for he held it to be an outstanding example of how the classical heritage was alive in the present (see Petzet 1983: 34). Karl Jaspers wrote to Heidegger on Sept. 23, 1933, that the rectorial address 'is up to now the only document of a present academic will . . . that will be lasting [bisher einzige Dokument eines gegenwärtigen akademischen Willens . . . , das bleiben wird]' (Jaspers 1978: 13).

39 A view which has significant parallels with Kuhn's. See GA 1: 419; GA 20: 4; GA 21: 16f.; GA 25: 30ff.; SZ 9ff.; FD 50ff.

40 Cf. SD 87f. For the details of the publication of Heidegger's *magnum opus* see Sheehan 1981: 15; Sheehan 1984: 181ff.

41 Heidegger's critique of Nazism from 1934 on will be based upon the insight that Nazism, instead of offering a genuine solution to Europe's spiritual crisis, is, with its racial ideology, rather a continuation, and indeed a consummation, of the decline of the West, predicted by Spengler (see e.g., his critique of Rosenberg and Kolbenheyer in his lectures of 1934/5 (GA 39: 27f.; see also Schmidt 1986: 86). It is only too natural that those who were offering such pseudo-solutions were the first to accuse him of 'pessimism' and 'nihilism'. 'The meaning of this philosophy' – we can read in the journal *Volk im Werden* in 1934 – 'is outspoken atheism and metaphysical nihilism, as it formerly had been primarily represented by Jewish authors in Germany; therefore, a ferment of decay and dissolution for the German people. In *Being and Time* Heidegger philosophizes consciously and deliberately about "everydayness" – there is nothing in it about nation, state, race, and all the values of our National Socialist world-view' (Kriek 1934: 247, reprinted in Schneeberger 1962: 225; see Moehling 1981: 36f., whose translation, with slight modifications, I adopted).

42 It is important to see that Heidegger's description of the passage from inauthenticity is now transposed to the level of history: just as *Dasein*, in effecting the passage, first becomes isolated by anticipating death and harkening to the call of conscience, in order to open itself newly and genuinely for the world, and to render authentic Being-with possible, a nation is now seen as stripping itself of the inauthentic international *Mitsein*, conceived of in terms of *das Man*, in order to set an example for other nations' possible retrieval of themselves, and to open up for them, in authentic 'leaping ahead', their own and genuine care (the term 'Verbrüderung' is characteristically adopted in *Being and Time* to denote inauthentic *Mitsein* [SZ 298]).

43 The term 'Beruhigung' also denotes inauthenticity: it is in fact a category of fallenness (see SZ 177).

44 It should be noted that the expression *Brückenschlagen* is also part of Heidegger's philosophical vocabulary, denoting as it does the (mostly hopeless) attempts made by modern philosophy to mediate between the subject-object dualism, viz., the self-autonomous egos (cf. SZ 124; GA 21: 91ff.). Heidegger's application of the term in a different context should not, I think, be taken as a mere extrinsic analogy. It should rather be seen as an aspect of the previously mentioned connection between the renewal of the Being-question, of the metaphysical tradition (of which the subject-object dualism is, after Descartes, an integral part), and the reshaping of the historical-factual grounds underlying the tradition. A new access to Being is, after all, not a purely intellectual operation. Heidegger may legitimately be said to have expected the national awakening to provide a new experience of Being (for hints to this effect see SU 10, 14; GA 26: 23).

45 The notion that labor is not equivalent to physical labor – a notion that

goes back to Hegel and was elaborated in detail by Ernst Jünger in his *Der Arbeiter*, published in 1932 (see Jünger 1959: 74, 84, 223, 283, *et passim*) – is stressed by Heidegger on other occasions too. He explains thereby why animals, properly speaking, cannot *work* (see Schneeberger 1962: 180; on Jünger's influence upon Heidegger cf. Petzet 1983: 37f.; concerning Jünger's rejection of racism see e.g., Jünger 1959: 160; on Jünger's becoming an opponent of the regime see Krockow 1958: 112, who mentions that Jünger's *Auf den Marmorklippen*, published in 1939, was generally understood as a *Widerstandsschrift*). Given this conception of labor and knowledge, the students' *Arbeitsdienst* can no longer be seen as 'condescension' from a higher world to a lower one. 'The so-called "spiritual work" is not such because it concerns "higher spiritual things", but because *as work* it reaches deeper into the necessity of a people's historical *Dasein*' (Schneeberger 1962: 181; see Schwan 1965: 182).

46 Cf. *SU* 8, 14; *GR* 198; *SUR* 23; Schmidt 1986: 90. Concerning the way Heidegger conceived of the revival of the university, and particularly of what should *not* be part of the revival, Georg Picht relates an interesting story. To give the first lecture within the framework of 'political education' – a measure introduced at the German universities by the Nazis – Heidegger invited a man, Victor von Weizsäcker, who was known not to be a Nazi. After interrupting abruptly the introductory words on national socialist revolution, pronounced by the leader of philosophy students, Heidegger let von Weizsäcker speak about Freud. Picht also relates the words with which Felix Jacoby opened his university lectures on Horace in Kiel, in 1933. It is perhaps worthwhile to quote them, to illustrate the general atmosphere of the day: 'As a Jew, I find myself in a difficult position. But as a historian, I have learnt that historical events are not to be assessed from a personal perspective. From 1927 onwards I have made my option for Adolf Hitler, and consider it an honor to be able, in the year of the nation's rise, to lecture on Augustus' poet. For Augustus is the only figure of world history whom one can compare to Adolf Hitler.' Jacoby, as Picht writes, later emigrated to Oxford (Picht 1977: 198ff.; see also Petzet 1983: 37; Stern 1984: 39f.).

47 Heidegger did not elaborate anything like a 'political theory', for, as will have become clear by now, the 'theoretical-practical' distinction was one of the traditional metaphysical distinctions he wanted to overcome (see e.g., *SZ* 193; *SU* 10). The elaboration of a 'political theory' requires conceding some autonomy to the political sphere – a concession which, given his critical attitude toward the fragmentation characteristic of modern societies, Heidegger obviously could not make (see Pöggeler's objection to this effect in Pöggeler 1982: 50). Nevertheless, it may be said that Heidegger's philosophy, in a certain precise sense, is very political – namely, in a sense of the term associated with the Greek *polis* (cf. Palmier 1968: 159). The rejection of the autonomy of the 'political', and the consequent lack of a 'political philosophy' in his thought is explicit in his lectures in 1943. Commenting upon Heraclitus, Heidegger asks: 'And what, if, thought in the manner of the Greeks, the concern for the emerging presence [Anwesenheit] of the Gods were the highest concern for the *polis*? . . . If such is the case, then . . . the thinker, in his concern for the essential proximity of the Gods, is the authentically "political" man' (*GA* 55: 11f.).

48 Cf. Schneeberger 1962: 123, 132f. Heidegger received a previous call to Berlin in 1930 (Schneeberger 1962: 12).

49 'Warum bleiben wir in der Provinz?' *Der Alemanne*, 2 March 1934, reprinted in *DE* 9ff. English translation by Thomas Sheehan (see Sheehan 1981: 27ff.). I adopted this translation, with slight modifications, in the above paraphrase.

50 Heidegger himself was by then a member of the party. He entered on May 1, 1933, in order primarily to facilitate his relations with the ministry, and to be thus in a better position to put his ideas through – that is, as he wrote in a letter to the de-Nazification committee at Freiburg University after the war, ‘to attempt from within National Socialism and while having a point of reference to it, to bring about a spiritual change in its development’. But it caused no little astonishment in the ministry that none of the deans appointed by him in the autumn were party members (Heidegger’s letter is quoted by Moehling (1981: 33); see also Fédier 1966: 900; Allemann 1969: 252; Palmier 1968: 9, 89; Pöggeler 1974: 18f.; *SUR* 33, 37). Erik Wolf, dean of the Faculty of Law, later to become a bitter enemy of the regime, wrote in 1945 that what he found fascinating in Heidegger’s ideas was the hope in a ‘regeneration of the university’ (see Hollerbach 1986: 39f.).

51 Cf. *GR* 201; *SUR* 37; Fédier 1966: 901; Allemann 1969: 253; Moehling 1981: 37; Palmier 1968: 159; Martin 1986: 67. His successor was appointed by the ministry, and Heidegger refused to be present at the public celebration of his successor’s assumption of office (see also Wisser 1977: 264). The final events took place at the end of April (see Ott 1984a: 357). Although Ott is critical of Heidegger, he admits that ‘the accord between National Socialism and Heidegger could not last long, provided that Heidegger was to remain true to his own convictions, and the Nazis to theirs’ (Ott 1984a: 353).

52 Cf. Youssef Ishaghpour’s Introduction in Goldmann 1973: 44f. See also Picht 1977: 198. The tendency to overlook such changes in the concrete historical situation surrounding Heidegger’s activities as rector is illustrated by Farias (1987), a book which appeared after the completion of this paper. A critic with strong anti-Heideggerian inclinations admitted that from Farias’s book ‘nothing decisively new had come to light’ (Augstein 1987: 215). It remains to be seen whether the German edition of this book, now in preparation, will contain substantive documentary support for its claims, as urged, among others, by Aubenque (1988) and Rorty (1988: 32). Some like Aubenque (1988) and Rorty (1988: 32) urged for more substantive documentary support. For more detailed remarks on the recent discussion raised by Farias’s and Ott’s books, together with a critical evaluation of the a priori notions inherent in them as well as an attempt to enlarge the context of those approaches, see now my paper ‘Fakten und Apriori in der neueren Beschäftigung mit Heideggers politischem Engagement’ in *Zur philosophischen Aktualität Heideggers. Symposium der Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung vom 24–8. April 1989 in Bonn-Bad Godesberg*, ed. by D. Papenfuss and O. Pöggeler, vol. 1: *Philosophie und Politik* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1991), 380–408.

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## Authenticity and Heidegger's challenge to ethical theory

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Douglas Kellner

Martin Heidegger's concept of authenticity in *Sein und Zeit*<sup>1</sup> offers a series of interpretive problems and challenges. Heidegger claims that his existential analytic is purely ontological and disclaims that his analyses have ethical import. Yet generations of readers, including some of the century's most prominent philosophers,<sup>2</sup> have been convinced that Heidegger has offered an ethical doctrine. Indeed there is a lively controversy as to whether Heidegger is nihilist who has devaluated traditional values and offered little or nothing in their place,<sup>3</sup> or whether Heidegger has provided a liberating doctrine of an authentic existence that is the foundation of an existentialist ethics.<sup>4</sup> In this paper I wish to sort these claims out and to inquire what relevance, if any, Heidegger's doctrine has for contemporary ethical theory. I shall argue that Heidegger's analyses contain a critique of ethical prescriptivism and put into radical question one of the hallowed dogmas of empiricism: the distinction between fact and value and normative and descriptive statements. Heidegger, we shall see, also provides an interesting contribution to the is-ought controversy and to our understanding of the relations between ethics and ontology. It could be possible that current discussions of ethics could profit from the study of a philosopher who is taboo in many analytical circles. Indeed, one of the benefits in reading Heidegger is his putting into question and offering alternatives to many of our dominant philosophical prejudices and our complacent commonsensical view of both our philosophical practice and everyday ways of being.

An obstacle to the appropriation of Heidegger into the English-speaking world is the work of Heidegger's interpreters and camp followers and their misleading and obscure renditions of his philosophy. His interpreters are for the most part mystifiers, or simplifiers. The majority are more obscure than Heidegger and heavy-handedly repeat his jargon without his originative philosophical talent, his vision, his prolonged



meditation on the problems he handles.<sup>5</sup> There has been, however, some promising recent work on Heidegger's philosophy that discloses the positive contribution his work could make to the English-speaking philosophical world. It is in this spirit of communicating Heidegger's philosophical contributions that the present essay was composed. My critique of Heidegger has been published elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

In this paper I shall first discuss Heidegger's distinction between an authentic and inauthentic existence and shall discuss the sense in which he is, or is not, offering a normative doctrine and engaging in social critique. This discussion will raise the question of the normative-descriptive distinction and the linguistic status of Heidegger's concept of authenticity. I shall then discuss the transition from an inauthentic to an authentic existence in Heidegger's account and shall elucidate his concept of authenticity. Finally, I shall raise the issue of the ethical implications of Heidegger's work and his contributions to contemporary ethical theory.

## I

Our starting point in the search for authenticity will be Heidegger's inquiry into average everydayness and the everyday self. Average everydayness describes how most people, most of the time, behave in the work world (*Umwelt*) and social world (*Mitwelt*). Heidegger claims that in everyday behavior most people are not aware of their unique potentiality for individuality (*Jemeinigkeit*), or of their possible authenticity, and have not chosen their own possibilities. He is calling attention to the conformity and other-directedness that prevails in everyday behavior. In his view, calculating where one stands in the social hierarchy and concern for one's social status (*Abständigkeit*; SZ 126) puts one in *subjection* to the other. For in order to maintain one's standing, one must do what *they* approve of, praise, command, and require, and refrain from socially disapproved or forbidden behavior. In this way, one submits to an often subtle and unnoticed domination by the norms and conventions of society and forfeits one's own possibilities of thought and action. This submission and bondage to one's social norms, peers, and leaders results in an averageness, a leveling down of social behavior to a certain homogeneity and sameness. In this way, one is disburdened (*entlastet*) of individuality and responsibility for being-a-self and is accommodated by one's society, rewarded for one's submission. However, 'in these ways of being', Heidegger writes, 'one is in a state of inauthenticity and failure to stand by oneself' (SZ 128).

We see that Heidegger characterizes the prevalent behavior of everyday existence as 'inauthentic'. This term, and Heidegger's analyses, would seem to imply that Heidegger is engaging in a type of social

critique, that he is using 'inauthenticity' and its family of explicative concepts in a pejorative sense to condemn blameworthy mediocrity, conformity, and forfeiture of individuality. Thus it seems that Heidegger has developed a negative evaluation of social forms of everyday behavior. But this interpretation is put into question by Heidegger's claim that he is not engaged in a 'moralizing critique of everyday Dasein' and his counter claim that he is doing 'pure ontology'

It may not be superfluous to remark that our interpretation has a purely ontological intention, and is far removed from any moralizing critique of everyday Dasein and from the aspirations of 'culture philosophy'.

(SZ 167)<sup>7</sup>

This disclaimer raises extremely difficult problems which are central to the question of interpreting Heidegger's concept of authenticity. For the question arises as to whether authenticity-inauthenticity are *evaluative* or *descriptive* categories. Although it seems that these categories are evaluative, Heidegger claims that his intentions (and thus categories) are purely ontological, which might lead one to conclude that Heidegger's categories are purely descriptive. In fact, this is exactly what interpreters of Heidegger's SZ who took into consideration the problem of the status of the language of authenticity have concluded. Löwith, for instance, in an early article (1930) stressed the neutrality of Heidegger's 'formal ontological assertions', which are completely 'neutral' and 'indifferent' to all valuational claims,<sup>8</sup> thus sharply ruling out the possibility of a normative dimension in Heidegger's text. This interpretation was later proclaimed by Vietta who argued that Heidegger's language of authenticity was purely descriptive (*reine Beschreibungslehre*).<sup>9</sup> But despite the disclaimers of Heidegger and his interpreters, there are good reasons to put into question the dubious claim that Heidegger's distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity has no evaluative aspects.

First, his concepts do have an evaluative connotation if one takes them in their ordinary signification, or their philosophical usages, i.e., inauthenticity, alienation, averageness and leveling down, idle chatter, etc., have a pejorative tone both in their everyday uses and in the works of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Simmel, Scheler, and the other philosophers from whom Heidegger borrowed his terms. Moreover, a careful reading of Heidegger's description of inauthenticity on SZ 126-30, which we have briefly examined, and his description of the 'fall' away from one's self and into inauthentic ways of being (SZ 167-80) discloses a rather thoroughgoing condemnation of inauthentic everydayness. For he describes an inauthentic existence as an 'absorption' in the everyday routine, a 'dispersion' into inauthentic ways of being such as idle chatter,

a constant search for diversion (*Neugier*), and a spurious, non-committal surmising about things to do and changes to make without really ever carrying through or changing anything (*Zweideutigkeit*). Surely, Heidegger's description of these inauthentic ways of talking, understanding, acting, etc., is disparaging, critical, and contains a negative evaluation. For example, idle chatter is described as a 'perversion' of the act of communicating which builds a false understanding. 'Curiosity' and 'ambiguity' are described as uprooted, alienated forms of 'groundless floating'. The whole process of getting entangled in an inauthentic existence is described as a 'downward plunge' (*Absturz*) into 'the groundlessness and nullity of inauthentic everydayness' (SZ 178). Thus Heidegger's own formulations of his concepts seem to be strikingly evaluative. In fact, when Heidegger characterizes his concept of authenticity, he admits that an ideal of existence underlies his interpretation (SZ 310), indicating that authenticity is an *ideal* for Heidegger which he is recommending as a modification of inauthenticity. Hence Heidegger's contrast between inauthenticity and authenticity indicates he is maintaining an *axiological dualism* which he dialectically develops, spelling out oppositions and differences between authentic and inauthentic ways of being. This interpretation would suggest that Heidegger's analysis of an inauthentic existence contains a negative evaluation of everyday behavior, whereas the concept of authenticity contains an ideal of being human.

I do not want to imply here, however, that Heidegger's doctrine of authenticity is merely 'evaluative' in a pejorative emotivist, non-cognitivist sense. Indeed we shall see that one of the novel characteristics of his doctrine of authenticity is that his contrast between an authentic and inauthentic existence contains *both* an evaluative and descriptive dimension and thus *undercuts* and puts into question a strict descriptive-evaluative distinction. Thus I suggest that Heidegger offers a new type of evaluative language that is grounded in a descriptive ontology. In this interpretation, Heidegger's concept of authenticity would replace traditional ethical theories which would be shown to be deficient in a yet unspecified sense.

Finally, I would suggest that Heidegger's concepts and distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity have the same *function* as traditional ethical language (i.e., to condemn, criticize, elicit change, recommend modifications, guide action, propose alternatives, etc.). Heidegger's analysis of inauthenticity provides a new way of looking at our everyday life and brings to attention some usually overlooked blameworthy characteristics and tendencies which he describes as 'inauthentic' ways of being. Crucially, these ways of being are *to be modified*. To be authentic one must change one's life:

Authentic being-oneself does not rest upon an exceptional condition

of the subject, a condition that has been detached from *das Man*; it is rather an *existentiell* modification of *das Man*.

(SZ 130)

Heidegger's theory helps in this process of self-transformation by forcing us to put into question some of our everyday habits and tendencies (and ways of doing philosophy) and attempts to provide an authentic disclosure of everyday being-in-the-world and its higher alternative (authenticity): 'this disclosure of human being (*Dasein*) is always accomplished as a clearing away of concealments and obscurities, as a breaking up of the disguises with which the individual bars its own way' (SZ 129). The breakthrough to an authentic existence is accomplished, Heidegger tells us, through a process of extrication and individuation in which one goes through the experiences of anxiety (anxiety from leading a meaningless existence, from failing to realize one's authentic potentialities; SZ 40); experiences of one's impending death which makes one aware of one's unique selfhood and the finite amount of time at one's disposal (SZ 46–53); and a call of conscience which informs one that one is guilty of living inauthentically, of running away from oneself, and that summons one to choose to become authentic, to resolutely take responsibility for one's choices (SZ 54–60). To be authentic one must choose and commit oneself to authentic possibilities. One must take over one's freedom, uniqueness, finitude, and failures and resolutely engage in the authentic projects through which one creates an authentic self.

The key to this process is Heidegger's concept of *resoluteness* (SZ 60, 62 and 74). To be authentic one must resolutely choose to liberate oneself from domination by social conventions and inauthentic ways of being and liberate oneself for one's own projects and self-determination. Choosing to be authentic 'in the light of the projected field of one's self-chosen potentiality-for-being, the resolute individual frees itself for its world' (SZ 298).

Heidegger is re-interpreting here, I suggest, the themes of self-determination and constitution. He rejects the Kantian model of 'pure reason' forever struggling to control and defeat 'empirical' passion, and utilizes a model of the individual struggling against society (*das Man*). The issue here concerns the determination of one's choice and the constitution of one's life. An inauthentic person does not determine itself, for it either blindly follows social convention, evades decisive choice by losing itself in distraction, or ineffectually surmising what it should do. Heidegger calls this forfeiture of self-determination *irresoluteness*. An irresolute person surrenders to the way things have been publicly interpreted and falls into the ways of being that are socially prescribed and recommended. An authentic person, on the other hand, resolutely rejects the authority

and domination of society and other people and takes over its freedom and responsibility to constitute its own *situation*.<sup>10</sup>

On Heidegger's account, only by resolving on some project or choosing a set of possibilities as one's authentic resolve does one constitute one's own situation, hence 'the situation has its foundation in resoluteness' (SZ 299). 'Situation' thus seems to signify the resolute individual's choice of its own possibilities, commitments, context of meanings and life-style – one's own distinct way of being-in-the-world. Heidegger is here, I believe, re-working the notion of 'constitution'. On Heidegger's analysis what the self constitutes is not the entire 'not I' (Fichte), or the phenomenal world (Kant), or the object of consciousness (Husserl), but rather it constitutes its own situation. Thus Heidegger modifies the idealist notion of the self constituting the world through his analysis of the authentic self constituting its own situation through its projects and resolves.

For Heidegger the authentic self is a self-made project. Heidegger's analysis here can be contrasted with Sartre's doctrine that 'man is what he makes himself to be'. For whereas Sartre argues that one's continuous making of oneself is a resultant of natural and spontaneous self-creation, Heidegger claims that one's creation of an authentic self is a state that is only attained by a *project* of self-being, implying that most people do not make themselves but are 'made' by their social environment and socialization. The claim that authenticity consists in a project of self-transformation calls for an explication of Heidegger's concept of project (*Entwurf*). The primary function of the understanding is, in Heidegger's account, to project possibilities. But *Entwurf* does not merely signify throwing oneself into something (as Sartre's *project*), but rather signifies designing, sketching, and planning, for the German term *Entwurf* literally means 'design, plan, project, scheme, blueprint'. These connotations suggest that the primary function of the human understanding is to sketch and project possibilities, to choose projects and weigh alternatives, to conceive what is possible for one, to decide how one can best carry out one's resolves. Thus the clear connection with autonomy which presupposes an ability to conceive and choose between alternative possibilities and a capacity for creative choice. What is constituted in an authentic project is an authentic self. The authentic self is the creation of a resolute individual who chooses to become authentic and to carry through authentic possibilities. To be a self is thus an achievement on this view characterized by resoluteness, autonomy, individuality, responsibility, loyalty and commitment. The criterion of an authentic self is *Selbständigkeit*, a steadfast standing loyal to one's authentic projects and remaining true to oneself.

Although Heidegger leaves open what possibilities an authentic person resolves upon (SZ 298), he does indicate the sort of choice he has in

mind and the *how* of authentic choice in his discussion of choosing one's authentic possibilities from one's heritage (SZ 74).<sup>11</sup> Section 74 of the chapter on 'Temporality and historicity' contains the key, I believe, to Heidegger's concept of an authentic existence. Those many interpreters who claim that authenticity is solely a way of being toward death have overlooked the importance of this late chapter for Heidegger's concept of authenticity and thus have omitted the most important aspects of his concept of authenticity and existential ontology. For in a key passage he describes the resolute choice of one's authentic possibilities as a *repetition* (*Wiederholung*) of authentic possibilities from one's heritage:

The resoluteness which comes back to itself and hands itself down, then becomes the repetition of a possibility for existence that has come down to us. *Repetition is the explicit handing-down*, that is, the going back into the possibilities of the human beings that have been. The authentic repetition of a past possibility of existence, the choosing of one's hero, is grounded in advancing resoluteness; for in resoluteness one first chooses the choice that makes one free for the struggle of loyalty and the struggling succession of the repeatable possibility. (SZ 385)

'Choosing one's hero' from the heritage can be explicated as the choice of one's vocation, or the choice of models to guide one in one's projects. This choice of one's hero has some similarity to Sartre's concept of the fundamental project, but with the requirement that one consciously and resolutely makes one's choices out of the heritage of possibilities. For example, after a careful consideration of one's own potentialities and possibilities ('what one is capable of' and 'what is open to one'), one can choose, say, philosophy as one's authentic possibility, and can choose past philosophers as, for example, Aristotle, or Marx, or Nietzsche as one's models. Or one could choose Christianity or revolutionary socialism, taking Jesus or Lenin as one's 'hero'.

The choice of one's authentic possibilities leads to a 'struggle for loyalty', referring to the repetition of one's choices in the present situation, so that one is true to one's resolve in standing by and remaining steadfast to one's projection of authenticity. The criterion for loyalty is *Selbständigkeit* which refers to the authentic person's autonomy, self-determination, and self-constancy. This criterion applies only to an authentic person for only the individual that has chosen authentic possibilities and constantly repeats its choice has achieved the 'steadiness' and 'steadfastness' of self-constancy. Seizing on a definite possibility and loyally standing by it refers to an activity of *commitment*.

This loyal repetition of one's possibilities can be contrasted with the irresoluteness which hops from possibility to possibility without ever

committing itself to anything (*Neugier*), and which covers over its irresoluteness with ambiguous idle talk. Thus, Heidegger's suggested way of transforming a dispersed, alienated existence is the resolute repetition of authentic possibilities, followed by a struggle for loyalty in which one remains true to one's choice against social pressures and the ever present possibility of backsliding.

Our interpretation suggests that Heidegger's concept of authenticity yields notions of self-determination, autonomy, responsibility, commitment, loyalty and a concept of the authentic self. Only an authentic person, Heidegger argues, has the essential characteristics of selfhood (individuality, identity, unity, substantiality and personality), hence he claims that his concept of authenticity provides an ontological grounding of what are taken to be traditional features of selfhood. Hence Heidegger corrects the idealist-transcendentalist account of the self of such people as Descartes, Kant, and Husserl.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, one could argue that Heidegger's distinction between an authentic and inauthentic existence also provides an ontological grounding of some of the fundamental concepts of ethics. Although we have but roughly sketched out Heidegger's concept of authenticity here,<sup>13</sup> rather than further spelling out and developing these ideas, I would like to now show the relevance of Heidegger's concept of authenticity to contemporary ethical theory.

## II

Let us begin with a passage that indicates a positive relation of Heidegger's existential analysis to ethics. In indicating the relation of his existential-ontological analysis of guilt to moral guilt Heidegger writes:

This essential being-guilty is equiprimordially the existential condition for the possibility of the 'morally' good and the 'morally' evil – that is, for morality in general and for the possible forms which this may take factically. The primordial 'being guilty' cannot be defined by morality, since morality already presupposes it for itself.

(SZ 286)

This passage suggests both a possible connection between Heidegger's ontology and ethics, and a general notion of the relationship between ethics and ontology. For Heidegger implies here that ontology is the foundation of ethics, and that it is illegitimate for ethics to define such concepts as guilt, 'since morality already presupposes it for itself' (SZ 286). If it is the task of philosophy to 'work out its presuppositions with more and more penetration', as Heidegger states on SZ 310, then it follows that the presuppositions of ethics must be analyzed, grounded,

and delimited in an ontological analysis. This would imply that ethical theory must be aware of its presuppositions and be sure they are adequately grounded in an ontology of human being – indicating that ethics requires existential–ontological clarification and understanding. This notion is repeated in another context on SZ 293:

Even the theory of value, whether it is regarded formally or materially, has as its unexpressed ontological presupposition a 'metaphysic of morals' – that is, an ontology of Dasein and existence.

What is clear from the passage cited is that Heidegger claims that ethics (1) has 'unexpressed ontological presuppositions' (SZ 293), and (2) cannot define its own presuppositions (SZ 286). These statements suggest a superordinate position in regard to ethics for ontology, and suggest that one of the tasks of ontology in relation to ethics is to work out the presuppositions of ethics, and thus to provide a grounding of its basic concepts. Following this argument, it could be suggested that ontology functions as a court of jurisdiction that validates or criticizes ethical theories, according to whether they are in accord with the being that is in question, as disclosed by the analysis of a well-grounded ontology, such as Heidegger claims to provide in SZ. That is, the ought must be shown to be grounded in the is, in much the same way that Heidegger holds that the ontological must be grounded in the ontic. Those philosophers who advocate the 'autonomy' of ethics, and hold that the 'ought' is an ideal that is far removed from the 'is' (which is human being and doing), must, I believe, answer the questions Heidegger raises and defend their enterprise by showing that their theory is based on an adequate foundation, that they have secured and clarified their presuppositions, and that they have a penetrating understanding of the subject matter of ethics – human being-in-the-world. Thus I believe that part of the ethical import of SZ rests upon the questions it raises for ethical theory and the challenge it presents to existing theories.

What is at stake is the question of the conditions of the possibility of ethics. Before, on this analysis, one can define such concepts as 'good', 'guilt', 'responsible', and so on, one should be clear as to the conditions of the possibility of being-good, being-guilty, being-responsible. That is, what kind of a being can 'be good' and what does this mean? What kind of a being can assume moral guilt? can be blamed? praised? held responsible? obligated? This type of questioning, if developed, would, I believe, lead to a powerful critique of existing ethical theory. Moreover, I believe that these considerations also illuminate Heidegger's own position in regard to ethics. For his seeming rejection of ethical analysis as a separate, specialized mode of inquiry is an implicit critique of the fragmentation of philosophical analysis that considers questions of the



good, right, or ought without having adequately secured a conceptual understanding of human being. By not securing an adequate foundation for its theories and imperatives, ethics is condemned to be merely prescriptive or emotive, confessional (or trivial, apologetic, and conformist, as in the case of much 'ordinary language' ethics). Thus if ethics is to be a philosophically respectable discipline it must become aware of its presuppositions, and build its theories on the firm foundation of an ontology of human being, or some general theory of human nature. Such are the considerations suggested by Heidegger's remarks concerning the relations between ethics and ontology.

Heidegger is a great enemy of philosophical dualisms which he believes are the source of much philosophical error. For example, he opposes dividing philosophy into theoretical and practical disciplines (and into dividing human behavior into theoretical and practical categories; SZ 300-1). Hence his analyses combine subject matter traditionally separated into ethics and ontology. In this regard, it would be a mistake to try to characterize Heidegger's concept of authenticity as either purely descriptive ontology or an evaluative ethics, for his project cuts beneath this distinction. The interconnection of what is usually separated into normative and descriptive disciplines and statements is thus a distinctive feature of Heidegger's concept of authenticity. In fact, it could be that the upshot of this problem of interpreting the propositional status of authenticity forces us to reconsider our often rigidly maintained dichotomy between evaluative and descriptive statements, value and fact, normative and descriptive disciplines. I have proposed that Heidegger's concept of authenticity contains both a descriptive and normative dimension, neither of which can be eradicated without distorting and restricting the scope, depth, and import of Heidegger's work. Further, I propose that Heidegger's undercutting the descriptive-normative dichotomy *corrects* a dubious methodological procedure that results in a restricted or one-sided analysis which, intentionally or not, omits considerations that do not fall within the prescribed-delimited domain of inquiry (I am thinking of much American social science, pure phenomenology, linguistic analysis and other disciplines that maintain a strict fact-value, descriptive-evaluative distinction, and that claim to exclude all value judgments, evaluative presuppositions, and ethical claims). We encounter here a Heideggerian procedure that puts into radical question established practices, methodological presuppositions, and theoretical commitments prevalent in the Anglo-American philosophical world. This problem in the area of hermeneutics (or methodology) has its analogue in the ethical problem of the relation between 'is' and 'ought' in which Heidegger again puts our current dogma into question. This challenge to our current philosophical conventions is one of the valuable contributions which SZ offers the English-speaking philosophical world.

In regard to the normative–descriptive distinction, I suggest that a radical questioning of this distinction and a careful study of the language of authenticity in *SZ* can contribute to an elimination of what I believe to be a superficial foundational dogma of an outworn empiricism. The origin of this dichotomy in twentieth-century positivism utilized the distinction for the most part as a corrosive tool; i.e., ethical statements or ‘value judgments’ are on this model merely expressions of an attitude or ‘feelings’, and thus have an inferior cognitive status, since they cannot be verified by empirical observation statements. But this whole model rests on a questionable and largely discredited empiricist theory of verification, evidence, and a propositional cognitive hierarchy that divided our language into two exclusive classes of statements, in which evaluative statements are rated cognitively inferior, since they are not capable of objective or factual verification, and are therefore subjective, emotive, non-cognitive.<sup>14</sup> But both the simplistic dichotomy between normative and descriptive and an explication of normative–evaluative statements as cognitively inferior are highly questionable notions which demand serious criticism and re-thinking.<sup>15</sup> I believe that Heidegger’s language of authenticity puts the distinction and its positivist explication into question by undercutting the dichotomy and by offering a vocabulary that has both a descriptive and evaluative dimension.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest that Heidegger’s concept of authenticity contains two further criticisms of traditional ethical theories that are worth considering. He claims that traditional ethical theories presuppose an ‘ontology of the present-at-hand’ (the view that everything that *is* must be something present-at-hand, *Vorhanden*). That is, traditional ethical theories, he claims, characterize their ethical predicates such as ‘good’ or ‘value’ as something present-at-hand interpreted as a property or predicate of a thing or state of affairs. This ontological presupposition that everything that *is* must be something present-at-hand (and thus an observable, describable entity) is, according to Heidegger, the source of much bad philosophical thinking. Speaking of the concept guilt, Heidegger writes:

Least of all can we come any closer to the existential phenomenon of guilt by taking our orientation from the idea of evil, the *malum* as *privatio boni*. Just as the *bonum* and its *privatio* have the same ontological origin in the ontology of the *present-at-hand*, this ontology also applies to the idea of ‘value’ which has been ‘abstracted’ from these. (SZ 286)

The passage suggests the extent to which ethical thinking has been dominated by the ontological model of the *Vorhanden*. Philosophers have traditionally taken values as something present-at-hand, either in a

Platonic world of Ideas, in an intelligible realm of consciousness, or in the 'objective' structure of reality. On this model of the *Vorhanden*, 'good' too must be something, a property, an entity, something intuitable. This ontological prejudice, then, is the source of the controversy over ethical naturalism (and the so-called naturalistic fallacy), over ethical intuitionism (which was honest enough to confess that they couldn't find 'good' or any ethical property in the world, but which was so stubbornly dominated by the metaphysics of the present-at-hand that they were forced into mystification to defend their enterprise), and over the question of the being (or 'logical status') of 'value'. The advocates of the linguistic 'revolution' in philosophy will agree with Heidegger that much ethical thinking has been dominated by bad metaphysics without seeing that they too are dominated by this ontological presupposition in their belief that ethical concepts can be reduced to (or explicated as) linguistic usage, speech acts, or social conventions: good solid factual data that one can set before him and analyze in a clear cut (if trivial) way. To these believers in *ordinary* usage, *common* sense, and social *conventions*, Heidegger could scornfully note that they are merely making explicit the social conventions of their (inauthentic) society and in submitting without criticism to these conventions are no better than 'slaves of Pharisaism' (SZ 293).

Heidegger's argument against the type of ethics that takes ethical concepts to denote entities present-at-hand could be that this enterprise is inadequate to the phenomena in question and must be replaced by a new vocabulary that is rooted in an authentic understanding of existence and a new way of thinking that does not become trapped in traditional presuppositions and inadequate thinking. Such an ontology Heidegger could claim to offer in SZ, and he claims that his existential ontology explicates the being of a being who is qualitatively other than the something present-at-hand explicated by the categories of traditional metaphysics (and ethics). One application of this thesis for ethics is its suggestion that ethicists should not waste their time searching for properties to which they can apply their ethical predicates, or sorting out different senses of the language of ethics, but should rather see into the ontological dubiousness of their procedure, and the need to ground their ethical analysis in an adequate ontology of human being.

Further, Heidegger puts into radical question the very possibility of a prescriptive ethics in his remarks concerning the ontological horizon of ethics. For Heidegger, any theory that interprets human being as a being who is to be evaluated according to its capacity and performance in either 'actualizing values' or 'satisfying norms' (or moral principles) operates within the horizon of everyday calculative concern and thus falls prey to an ontologically dubious practice. From this standpoint, ' "Life" is a business, whether or not it covers its costs' (SZ 289). That is, human

being is pictured as a household or business that is run according to some conventionally established procedure, and is judged and evaluated in terms of how it measures up to that standard. Heidegger suggests that most ethical theories operate in the sphere of everyday concern and calculation in which they presuppose certain standards, moral principles, or norms, and then measure human being according to whether it meets the mark or satisfies the demand in question. For example, he suggests that Kant, with his representation of conscience as a 'court of justice', has fallen prey to the horizon of concern and calculation, for his interpretation was guided by the idea of satisfying or transgressing the 'moral law' (SZ 293).

What is objectionable here is not only a crude, mechanical way of thinking, but also the ontologically unclear and questionable nature of the moral principles, laws, imperatives, and so forth that are used as the norms controlling the act of judging. In particular, Heidegger puts into question the notion of a moral law and *ought*, and the demand or requirement (*Forderung*) made that is supposedly *binding* or *obligatory* (*verbindlich*). In reference to guilt, Heidegger writes:

This kind of lacking is a failure to satisfy some requirement which applies to one's existent being with others.

It remains undecided how such requirements arise and in what way their character as requirements and laws must be conceived on the basis of their having this source. . . . The idea of guilt must not only be raised above the domain of that concern in which we reckon things up, but it must also be detached from relationship to any law or ought such that by failing to comply with it one loads himself with guilt.

(SZ 282, 283)

These remarks implicitly raise many difficult questions. For what is the source of obligation, moral law, ethical imperatives? Why *must* I do xyz, and *not* do abc? The ontological dubiousness of the concept of ought (moral law, prescriptives) thus throws into question the whole moral practice of calculating, judging, and condemning in relation to fulfilling, failing to fulfill or transgressing a moral law or ought. Heidegger's most critical remarks throwing into question the 'ought' or a binding, obligatory imperative are found in a neglected passage, SZ 156. In speaking of the phenomenon of validity (*Geltung*), he distinguishes three essential predicates: ideality, objectivity, bindingness (*Verbindlichkeit*). He argues that these 'significations' are 'not only opaque in themselves but constantly get confused with one another. Methodological fore-sight demands that we do not choose such unstable concepts as clues to interpretation' (SZ 156). These criticisms are directed against an analysis

of the 'theory of judgment', but I believe they also apply to ethical judgments, for the characteristics in question are generally taken to be essential constituents of ethical judgments.<sup>16</sup> This means that the concept of 'bindingness' or 'obligatoriness' (*Verbindlichkeit*) is a dubious one for Heidegger, who would thus be forced by his own philosophical reflections from prescribing authentic possibilities that would be obligatory or binding (at least until the 'ontological opaqueness' and confusion surrounding these 'unstable' concepts is dissolved).

These remarks suggest a criticism of ethical prescriptivism: the claim of most ethical theories to lay down universally valid, binding, obligatory laws that provide a strict regulation of human behavior. The force of Heidegger's analysis is that he puts into question the two most important types of ethical theories in his tradition: Kantian *Moralität* whose prescriptivism has been thrown into question, and Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* whose social ethics are equated by Heidegger with inauthentic social conventions that are an obstacle to individual authenticity. On Heidegger's account, one who takes over the moral values, imperatives, customs, and attitudes that are transmitted to one through one's socialization, and who acts as if these human posits had an unquestionable validity and authority and were therefore to be taken over, followed, and actualized exemplifies the inauthentic way of being. It is this surrender of autonomy, discrimination, and evaluation that Heidegger is criticizing in his characterization of the fall into an inauthentic existence. His claim is that by disburdening oneself of the need to choose, evaluate, and resolve for oneself, one becomes an indistinguishable one-among-many, and loses one's ownmost potentiality-for-being in herd-being.

Thus, although Heidegger thoroughly rejects the prevalent ethical theories of his day, it would be a mistake to simply label him a nihilist for we have seen that he has strong *philosophical* objections against traditional ethical theories. Furthermore, we have seen that he lays at least the foundation for a new type of ethical theory grounded in a well-secured philosophical anthropology (whether Heidegger's anthropology does provide an adequate basis for a philosophical ethics is not an issue here). In fact, Heidegger suggests in a passage, that I shall cite in conclusion, that the task of developing a philosophical ethics and projecting a set of authentic ethical possibilities remains a task yet to be fulfilled by a 'thematic existential anthropology':

To present the factual *existentiell* possibilities in their chief features and interconnections, and to interpret them according to their existential structure, falls among the tasks of a thematic existential anthropology.

(SZ 301)

This passage suggests that the crucial philosophical tasks of ethical theory remain to be fulfilled.

## Notes

1 *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: 1963). Hereafter *Sein und Zeit* shall be referred to as *SZ*; page references will be to the German edition and translations will be my own. The English translation is by Macquarrie and Robinson: *Being and Time* (New York: 1962). I shall limit my discussion of Heidegger's concept of authenticity and critique of ethics to an analysis of the doctrine in *Sein und Zeit*, thus avoiding the complicated and thorny issue of the relation between the early and the later Heidegger.

2 For example, Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* (New York: 1956); Ricoeur in *Heidegger and the Quest for Truth* (Chicago: 1968); Buber in *Between Man and Man* (New York: 1962); Adorno in *The Jargon of Authenticity* (Evanston: 1973); and Marcuse in 'Beiträge zu einer Phänomenologie des Historischen Materialismus', *Philosophische Hefte*, 1 (Berlin: 1928).

3 De Waelelens, *La Philosophie de Martin Heidegger* (Louvain: 1942); Körner, 'Heideggers Privatreligion', *Eckhart* 25, 1955; and Rosen, *Nihilism* (New Haven: 1970).

4 Wild, *The Challenge of Existentialism* (Bloomington: 1959) and Olafson, *Persons and Principles* (Baltimore: 1967).

5 The two most misleading types of interpretation are, first, those which interpret *Sein und Zeit* and the concept of authenticity from the perspective of the later Heidegger and often read into the text a questionable interpretation of the concept of authenticity. For example, Richardson defines authenticity as a 'transcendence unto Being which is proper to itself' (p. 83) and defines the constitution of an authentic self as a 'transcending beings to Being' (p. 50), which requires a recollection of the 'ontological dimension' (p. 51). William Richardson, *Martin Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (Den Haag: 1964). A second sort of dubious interpretation simplistically equates Heidegger's concept of authenticity with a way of being toward death, as if Heidegger had a death ethic. This interpretation is maintained by Sartre, op. cit., Ricoeur, op. cit., Löwith, *Heidegger: Denker in dürftiger Zeit* (Göttingen: 1965), Demske, *Being, Man, and Death* (Lexington, KY: 1970), de Waelelens, op. cit., and many others.

6 I am thinking of such works as Macomber's *The Anatomy of Disillusion* (Evanston: 1967), Schmitt's *Martin Heidegger on Being Human* (New York: 1968), and Olafson's *Persons and Principles*, op. cit. See also my review of Adorno's *Jargon of Authenticity in Telos* 19 (Spring, 1974). I should note that the present article was written in 1972 before my study of Adorno and consequent assumption of a more critical position towards Heidegger.

7 Further, he claims that his term 'fallenness' 'expresses no negative evaluation' (*SZ* 175), that his notion of 'idle chatter' does not have a 'disparaging signification' (*SZ* 167), and that his claim that one exists in a state of 'untruth' in the condition of inauthenticity excludes any 'negative evaluation' (*SZ* 222).

8 Löwith, Karl. *Theologische Rundschau*, N.F. II (1930), Heft 1, p. 60.

9 Vietta, Egon. *Die Seinsfrage bei Martin Heidegger* (Stuttgart: 1950), p. 46.

10 I should point out that 'situation' is a technical term for Heidegger that describes the result of a project of choosing authenticity and does not merely

refer to what is generally taken to be a 'situation' in ordinary language and in such philosophers as Dewey and Sartre.

11 Heidegger's analysis of historicity (*Geschicklichkeit*) is of crucial importance for his philosophical project and for his concept of authenticity.

12 Heidegger's concept of the self is inextricably interconnected with his concept of authenticity, thus providing another example of how Heidegger combines what is usually separated into theoretical-ontological and practical-ethical thematics. It is not that Heidegger endows the acting or ethical self with a primacy over the theoretical self as is sometimes argued. Rather, Heidegger combines characteristics of the knowing and acting self into a unitary concept of selfhood that accounts for both the ontological features of selfhood and the features of an authentic self.

13 I more fully develop the concepts and ideas sketched out here in my 1973 Columbia University Dissertation *Heidegger's Concept of Authenticity*.

14 The inadequacies of this model are well known and several papers criticizing its application to ethical analysis can be found in *Theories of Ethics*, Philippa Foot, editor (London: Oxford, 1967). Cf., especially Foot's 'Introduction', her essay on 'moral beliefs', Searle's essay 'How to derive "ought" from "is"', and John Austin's remark that, 'the familiar contrast of "normative-evaluative" as opposed to the factual is in need, like so many dichotomies, of elimination', op. cit., p. 13.

15 Limitations of space and time make it impossible to further develop the problems involved in the normative-descriptive distinction within the bounds of this study. The problem has produced a vast but inconclusive literature in the world of analytic philosophy (some references cited in note 4), and is a central philosophical issue in Europe where 'critical rationalists' (i.e., Popper and Hans Albert) defend the old positivist distinction against the attacks of 'Neo-Marxists' and others (i.e., Adorno, Habermas, Marcuse). The question is also an important one for social scientists, since the day of Max Weber's distinction between fact and value, and his notion of a value-free science.

16 The properties of a normative-ethical judgment are often taken to be 'ideality' (or in the Anglo-American philosophical world 'non-naturalness'), 'objectivity' (or 'universalizability'), and 'bindingness' (or 'prescriptivity'). Thus Heidegger's critical remarks can apply to certain features of ethical language, which he could claim are ontologically (or 'conceptually') unclarified, ungrounded, and confused.

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## Who is Dasein? Towards an ethics of authenticity

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Christopher Macann

In his *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger cites, without mentioning by name, a statement made by Jean Beaufret: 'Ce que je cherche à faire, depuis très longtemps déjà, c'est préciser le rapport de l'ontologie avec une éthique possible.'<sup>1</sup> Notoriously however, Heidegger not only never developed anything like an explicit Ethics, he repeatedly rejected any such possibility.<sup>2</sup> In the *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger gives as his reason the derivative character of Ethics. Ethics, he tells us, arose along with Logic and Physics in the school philosophy of Plato. By that time thinking had been converted into Philosophy, Philosophy into Science and Science into an affair of the Schools.<sup>3</sup>

A second objection bears upon the impossibility of tacking on an Ethics to fill out a theoretical philosophy on the practical side. This objection is voiced in *Being and Time*<sup>4</sup> where it is clearly directed against Kant. And yet, who would wish philosophy to be deprived of the Kantian Ethics? Moreover if, as Heidegger insists, the *Critique* is to be interpreted as a proto-ontology, then Kant's practical philosophy actually becomes an Ethics doubly grounded in ontology; first, in that the practical philosophy is already founded in the theoretical (now interpreted as ontology) and second, in that Heidegger, like Fichte before him, recommends a reversal of this very order of priority – with the Practical Critique grounding the Theoretical.

But perhaps the crucial complaint can best be captured in a metaphor which Heidegger does not hesitate to employ at the very end of his *Introduction to Metaphysics* ('Being and the ought'), the metaphor of the distinction between an 'upward' and a 'downward' direction. There, Heidegger makes use of a diagram whose nodal point is being. Along the horizontal axis, you find becoming, on the one side, and appearance, on the other while, along the vertical axis, you find the Ought, on the up side and Thinking, on the down side. 'The distinction between being



and thinking', Heidegger tells us, 'is downward. . . . The differentiation between being and the ought, on the other hand, is upward.'<sup>5</sup> This, in the end, is why the ought defies being, because it lifts itself off from being (and so denies itself the grounding in being) and then, to make matters even worse, tries to give itself a pseudo-being, *qua* validity. 'As being itself becomes fixated as idea, it strives to make good the resulting degradation of being. But by now this is possible only if something is set *above* being, something that being never is but always *ought* to be.'<sup>6</sup>

But what if human being were, in its very being, not yet what it ought to be? And what if the very task of philosophy were nothing other than that of drawing attention to an ethical (in Spinoza's broad sense of that word) potential, inherent in the very being of human being, which it might not yet have realized but still could realize effectively – the 'possibility' which elsewhere Heidegger will say stands 'above actuality'? What if the entire saga of philosophy – beginning not with the Greeks but with a much, much older philosophical tradition, that of the Vedanta – were to be interpreted as a repeated attempt to help human being along the way to a self-overcoming which would realize that very 'ought' which, for the time being, human being is not? That Heidegger will not countenance any such suggestion is due to his refusal of anything like an *upward* orientation of consciousness, and this despite his explicit acceptance of its opposite, the *downward* orientation. That, especially in his critique of transcendental philosophy, Heidegger repeatedly effects a quite naive conversion (or inversion) of upward into downward should not blind us to the ethical blindness which must needs follow upon such a refusal of the upward implications of the motif of self-overcoming – and this from a philosopher who goes a long way with the Nietzschean prophecy of an Overman!

But although, for the reasons given above, nothing like an *explicit* Ethics is to be found in Heidegger, something like an *implicit* Ethics can be traced back to his thinking about authenticity in *Being and Time*. That such a connection is indeed appropriate is confirmed by the ethical significance accorded to the theme of authenticity by such French existentialist thinkers as Sartre and Camus.<sup>7</sup> In his intellectually unsatisfactory but popular lecture 'Existentialism is a humanism', the ethical import of the slogan: 'Existence precedes essence' (a slogan which Heidegger specifically criticizes in his *Letter on Humanism*,<sup>8</sup>) becomes clear when Sartre borrows from Kant a universalizability thesis (when I choose, I choose for all mankind, i.e., absolute responsibility) which it is difficult to reconcile with his own existential commitment to authenticity (I make myself be through my choices, i.e., absolute freedom), and which he himself took over from Kant with a view to refuting the objection of egoism. Hence, not only must the question of an ethics of authenticity

remain an open question, it is doubtful whether, as yet, it has been settled satisfactorily.

I would like to argue that the theme of authenticity *can* serve as the basis for a possible Ethics and one which *is* rooted in an ontology, that Heidegger's own ontology *does* come close to laying the foundations for such an ethics but that the difficulty of carrying such a project through with regard to *Being and Time* has to be attributed to the inadequacy (bordering on inconsistency) of the existential categories Heidegger employs to set up his ontology. Rather than dismissing Ethics as an ontologically improper topic, I would like to suggest a revision of the existential categories Heidegger himself employs to characterize Dasein, a revision which might make just such an Ethics possible.

Just like a building, a philosophy can be no more stable or extensive than its foundations allow. The use of an architectural metaphor is not at all inappropriate in connection with Heidegger, since he himself repeatedly uses the concept of 'ground' with that ambiguity which characterizes the term in the German – ground as reason or cause, ground as foundation.<sup>9</sup> For example, in the Kant book he has this to say about the expression 'to lay the foundation of . . .'. 'It's meaning', he claims, 'is best illustrated within the field of architecture. . . . Laying the foundation is the projection of the building plan itself in such a way as to indicate on what and how the structure will be grounded.'<sup>10</sup> If I am right in thinking that a revision of Heidegger's existential categories is called for if an Ethics of authenticity is to be possible, clearly, this revision will have repercussions which extend far beyond the confines of an Ethics.

Our starting point must be a preliminary identification of the existential categories employed in *Being and Time*. Heidegger introduces the notion of existential categories in his Introduction.

All *explicata* to which the analytic of Dasein gives rise are obtained by considering Dasein's existence-structure. Because Dasein's characters of Being are defined in terms of existentiality, we call them '*existentialia*'. These are to be sharply distinguished from what we call '*categories*' – characteristics of Being for entities whose character is not that of Dasein.<sup>11</sup>

That Heidegger postpones the detailed examination of the *existentialia* is due to the organization of the first part of *Being and Time* into three heads, 'World' (and the worldhood of the world), the 'Who' and 'Being-in' as such. For it is only in the conclusive context of being-in as such that the *existentialia* can be explicitly addressed.

In the fifth chapter devoted to Being-in as such, we do find a fourfold specification of the existential structures: State of Mind, Understanding, Discourse and Falling. But precisely because the existential category of

Falling is, and can only be, introduced to account for the inauthenticity of Dasein, the question of authenticity cannot itself be addressed until later, and is indeed saved up for the second part of *Being and Time* devoted to the problematic of time, where it is discussed under the head of a further existential possibility, namely individualization, which reverses the tendency inherent in Falling.

Before we begin our detailed analysis, there are two things to note. First, there can be no doubt about the importance of the theme of authenticity. It dominates the first three chapters of Division II, that is, takes up half of the space left to the second division. No other theme, with the possible exception of temporality, looms so large on the canvas of *Being and Time*. Second, since the issue of authenticity bears upon the being of the self, the very attempt to establish the basis for an ethics of authenticity will depend upon the way in which the self is conceived. Hence the question: Who is Dasein?

## 1 The existential structure of Falling

Falling means fallenness into *das Man* – the ‘They’. The concept of *das Man* is introduced in chapter IV, devoted to being-with and being-one’s-self, therefore in a context which, from the very beginning, raises the critical question of being-one’s-self. *Mit-sein*, or being-with, is a way of being of Dasein in so far as it is in the world. Being-with and being-in-the-world are equi-primordial structures. Hence, the world is always one that I share with Others. At the same time, as a being who shares a world with others, I have a mode of being of my own, which Heidegger calls *Mit-Dasein*. My very being-self is characterized by being with Others. ‘In this kind of being’, Heidegger tells us, ‘is grounded the mode of everyday Being-one’s-Self [*Selbstsein*].’<sup>12</sup> This recognition of being-Self is both significant and paradoxical, significant in that it implies a concern with what it means for Dasein to be itself, paradoxical, because the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that, proximally and for the most part, Dasein is precisely *not itself*. ‘Dasein is in each case mine, and this is its constitution; but what if this should be the very reason why, proximally and for the most part, Dasein is *not itself*?’ (Heidegger’s italics).<sup>13</sup> The primacy of not-being-self is the reason why Heidegger has to take pains to point out that ‘the “not-I” is by no means tantamount to an entity which essentially lacks “I-hood” but is rather a definite kind of Being which the “I” itself possesses, such as having lost itself.’<sup>14</sup>

That Dasein is itself primarily in the mode of not-being-self is then further explained in terms of Dasein’s understanding itself out of the world in which it finds itself and in terms of those entities which it encounters in the world which, if they are not actually entities whose

mode of being is not that of a self, are at least persons whose mode of being can always be, and usually is, interpreted as that of a person-thing present at hand in the world. Thus, 'the Being of those entities which *are there with us*, gets conceived as presence-at-hand'.<sup>15</sup> And yet, at the end of the section on the 'They', it becomes clear that Heidegger does not want to let go of the possibility that authentic being-self remains a real possibility. He does this by insisting that authentic being-self does not represent a suspension of the basic conception of being-with (which is that of not-being-self) but only a modification of the former. 'Authentic being-one's-self does not rest upon an exceptional condition of the subject, a condition that has been detached from the "They"; it is rather an existentiell modification of the "They" – of the "They" as an essential existentiale.'<sup>16</sup>

Notice Heidegger says 'existentiell' not 'existential' modification. In fact he cannot say 'existential', since the category of Falling (which is an existential category) will commit him to an existential analysis of inauthenticity. Thus by 'existentiell' Heidegger must mean a possibility which is actually available to Dasein but to which Dasein is not necessarily committed, indeed, is unlikely to ever realize. Hence his conclusion that there is an 'ontological gap' separating the self-sameness of the authentically existing Self from the identity of that 'I' which maintains itself throughout its manifold Experiences.<sup>17</sup> Clearly Heidegger believes that this gap can be bridged. It will be our task to show that, as matters stand, this ontological gap cannot be bridged.

The investigation of the four existential structures is reserved for chapter 5 on being-in as such. But although the correct procedure would seem to be to begin with an examination of the three *existentialia* which operate at the level of experience and to proceed on from there to an examination of their expression in and through language, this is not how Heidegger does actually proceed. Rather, State-of-mind and Understanding are examined first, as ontologically equi-primordial structures in which the Being of the 'there' maintains itself. Interpretation is then derived as an extreme form of Understanding. And from interpretation, the analysis moves on into an exposition of Discourse, before coming back to an examination of Falling as the everyday being of the 'there'. In other words, under the head (A) of 'The existential constitution of the "there"', State-of-mind, Understanding and Discourse are investigated first, while Falling is only explicitly introduced under the head (B) of 'The everyday Being of the "there" '.

In fact, the displacement of the existential structure of Falling is even more radical than might appear from this division into the two heads A and B. For the initial introduction of the concept of Falling is only preliminary. It is succeeded by a description of concrete forms in which language has already fallen, namely, idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity.

Only then is Falling presented *explicitly* as a basic kind of Being which belongs to everydayness. Implied therein is a thesis to the effect that language itself plays a large part in the phenomenon of Falling.

The question that arises from this organization of the material is the following: is Falling really an existential structure or, at least, an existential structure on a par with State-of-mind and Understanding?<sup>18</sup> Or should it not rather be regarded as an existentiell structure, one grounded perhaps in other, more fundamental structures? Why, for example, does Heidegger never say that Falling is ontologically equi-primordial with State-of-mind, Understanding and Discourse? To be sure, he does say that '*Falling* is a definite existential characteristic of Dasein itself.'<sup>19</sup> Or again, that '*Falling* reveals an essential ontological structure of Dasein itself'.<sup>20</sup> But it is noticeable that he does not use the concept of equi-primordality. Understanding is explicitly said to be equi-primordial with State-of-mind.<sup>21</sup> Again, he says quite unequivocally: '*Discourse* is existentially equi-primordial with *State-of-mind* and *Understanding*.'<sup>22</sup> No such statement qualifies the presentation of Falling.

Given the order in which the *existentialia* are presented, it might seem as though language constitutes the specific moment in which being-self is diverted into not-being-self. Not only does language form the bridge between Understanding and Falling, Falling is itself understood out of inauthentic forms of Discourse. But then, not only does Heidegger recognize authentic modes of Discourse, the inauthentic are *specifically derived* as de-formations of the former. The analysis of idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity is itself preceded by an investigation of assertion or propositional language. Not only is the apophantical 'as' of assertion contrasted with the 'as' of an interpretation which understands circumspectively, the former is always seen as a derivation from the latter. Indeed it must be so seen, since it is described in terms of a deformation of that very 'as' structure which is definitive of hermeneutical understanding. Thus, Heidegger asserts, 'assertion cannot disown its ontological origin from an interpretation which understands'.<sup>23</sup> In other words, the inauthentic Understanding, expressed in assertion, is derived from authentic Understanding, as a deficient mode of the former.

It is for this reason that, in the section on 'Being-there as Understanding', Heidegger will say: 'Understanding is the existential Being of Dasein's own potentiality-for-being; and it is so in such a way that this being discloses in itself what its being is capable of.'<sup>24</sup> That 'potentiality-for-being' has the meaning of being-self rather than not-being-self becomes even clearer when potentiality-for-being is itself understood in terms of the structure of 'projection' and when the structure of projection is laid out in such a way that, in projecting, Dasein is said to '*not yet*' be what it has in it to be.

Only because the being of the 'there' receives its constitution through Understanding and through the character of Understanding as projection, only because it *is* what it becomes (or alternatively, does not become), can it say to itself 'Become what you are', and say this with understanding.<sup>25</sup>

That authentic self-understanding is *at least* as primordial as the inauthentic is confirmed in the very next paragraph. Heidegger tells us that Understanding can devote itself primarily to the disclosedness of the world, in which case it understands itself inauthentically in terms of the world. But Understanding can also throw itself primarily into the 'for the sake of which'. This means that 'Dasein exists as itself'. Hence 'Understanding is either authentic, arising out of one's self as such or inauthentic'<sup>26</sup> – presumably because it does not arise out of self as such. Only a little later we find a passage in which authentic being-self definitely appears to be accorded the priority over inauthentic not-being-self. Heidegger tells us that 'transparency' (*Durchsichtigkeit*) is the term he proposes to use to designate 'knowledge of the self' (*Selbsterkenntnis*). Transparency is 'the sight which is related primarily and on the whole to existence'.<sup>27</sup> He goes on to contrast this *Selbsterkenntnis* with the *Sichkennen* encountered earlier in the course of everyday being-with<sup>28</sup> in a context where solicitude is described as dwelling proximally and for the most part in 'deficient or at least Indifferent modes'. To be sure, Heidegger does distinguish two kinds of solicitude, the inauthentic kind that *leaps in for* the other and *takes away* his care and the authentic kind that *leaps ahead of him* to *give his care back* to him. But this only makes it that much more urgent to determine which is the original form and which the derivative.

The same question arises with the same ambiguity in relation to the first of the existential structures, State-of-mind. For State-of-mind is analysed in terms of 'thrownness' and 'facticity'. Thrownness is not an incidental but an essential characteristic of Dasein and the same goes for facticity. '*Facticity is not the factuality of the factum brutum of something present-at-hand, but a characteristic of Dasein's being*'.<sup>29</sup> Mood is nothing but the disclosure of that as which one is given over to being. In disclosive understanding of Mood, Dasein is itself, comes to terms with what it is. But Heidegger hastens to add that, proximally and for the most part, states of mind disclose Dasein 'in the manner of an evasive turning-away'.<sup>30</sup> Rather than seeking itself, Dasein tends to evade itself by fleeing from that very self as which it is delivered over to being. But even here it is intimated that Dasein could not flee itself if it did not have some (pre-ontological) understanding of that very self which it was seeking to evade.

One is bound at this point to ask: could either facticity or thrownness

(or both) not have been presented as the basic *existentialia*, thereby leaving open the question whether Dasein comes to terms with or evades that as which it is delivered over to being? If Falling turns out in the end to be a falling away from, or an evasion of, self then the more primordial structure would seem to be that as which Dasein is delivered over to being – its very own self as revealed in facticity. Falling could then have been introduced as an *existentiell* modification which would explain why, for the most part, self-disclosure takes the form of a fleeing from self rather than a seeking for self.

The critical question can perhaps be better formulated in other terms, terms which do not beg the ontological question from the outset. Is Falling a *primary* or a *secondary* phenomenon? Three alternatives seem to suggest themselves. First, Being-self could be presented as the ontologically primary phenomenon, from which not-being-self would accordingly be derived, perhaps incidentally and occasionally but also perhaps essentially, and for the most part. In this case Falling would be secondary. Second, not-being-self could be presented as the primary phenomenon from which, accordingly, being-self has to be derived as an *existentiell* modification but only at the risk of making the issue of authenticity one of Dasein's *merely ontic* affairs. In this case Falling remains primary. Third, Being-self and Not-being-self could be presented as equi-primordial – Falling following from *being-self* in the mode of absorption in the world. In this case, no decision could be arrived at with regard to the primacy of Falling. Though Heidegger tends to waver between the second and the third of these alternatives, it will be our task to show that the theory of authenticity holds up, as a theory, only if the first of these possibilities is adopted.

Falling is presented as fallenness into the average everydayness of *das Man*, the 'They'. The way in which the 'They' understands and interprets is, of course, non-ontological. Average everydayness conceals from the self its own ontological constitution and so exposes Dasein to that understanding of itself which comes to it from the world. 'Dasein understands itself proximally and for the most part in terms of its world.'<sup>31</sup> The Who calls itself an 'I' but is nothing less than something individual. 'The "who" is not this one, not that one, not oneself, not some people, and not the sum of them all. The "who" is the neuter, *the "They"*.'<sup>32</sup> Because the 'They' constantly accommodates itself to the others, its understanding is nothing better than public opinion. 'Distantiality, averageness, and levelling down, as ways of Being for the "They", constitute what we know as "publicness".'<sup>33</sup>

But if, as a result of Falling, Dasein has ceased to be itself, it would seem that Falling could remain an ontological structure *only if* it was presented as a Falling away from a more primary state in which Dasein was itself. That into which Dasein falls would then be something

*secondary* while that from which it falls would be *primary*. However, the structure which motivated the 'fall' might still be an ontological structure, if it enforced the passage or transition from the primary to the secondary. If, on the other hand, no such primary state is acknowledged then Fallenness into the 'They' must itself be envisaged as something primary. And then we are in difficulty.

Here we find ourselves faced with an equivocation of which Heidegger hardly seems to be aware. On the one hand, Heidegger specifically excludes the possibility that Falling might be a 'fall' from a purer and higher 'primal status'.<sup>34</sup> Or again: 'So neither must we take the fallenness of Dasein as a "fall" from a purer and higher "primal status"'.<sup>35</sup> This might be taken as an anti-Platonic move, refusing any interpretation of Falling as a Falling away from some more primary, and for this reason *higher*, state. And yet, just a little later he tells us: 'In Falling, Dasein *itself* as factual Being-in-the-world is something from which it has already fallen away.' In other words, being-self is here presented as something from which Dasein *has* fallen away when it falls into the world. Can this difficulty be resolved by distinguishing between a 'higher' and a 'lower' primal state? Dasein does not fall from a purer and 'higher' status because the self from which it falls away is actually a 'lower', less developed state of itself. But this still implies that there is a 'lower', more primal self from which Dasein falls away. Heidegger's objection that everydayness does not coincide with primitiveness<sup>36</sup> is no counter-example because, in this passage, he is contrasting developed with primitive cultures – which also have an everydayness of their own. So what sense does it make to say that Dasein, as fallen, is not itself, unless being-self is presented as an original possibility from which Dasein can fall away when it falls into the 'They'?

Or again, (in Falling) 'Dasein is said to plunge out of itself into itself, into the groundlessness and nullity of inauthentic everydayness'.<sup>37</sup> But if this downward plunge (*Absturz*), motivated by Falling, is a plunge into groundlessness then how can Falling be an ontological structure, since the function of an ontological structure is to furnish grounds, to lay the ground. Unless, of course, the ground (*Grund*) were an abyss (*Abgrund*). Could it be said that Dasein is so *grounded* that groundlessness, or the absence of grounds (nullity), arises, and this with necessity? This seems to be the gist of what he is driving at. But the question remains whether it is consistent with his concept of the self.

The difficulty could be presented another way. *In general*, being-in-the-world is supposed to be the original ontological condition which is lost sight of. Heidegger's analysis of the transformation of the ready-to-hand way of dealing with things encountered in a world into the present-at-hand representation of such things pursues this itinerary of forgetfulness. An ontological investigation is required to bring out the



groundlessness of the present-at-hand way of envisaging things and to ground the latter in the more fundamental, because more primordial, condition captured by the structure of being-in-the-world. In so far as Dasein is *in* the world, the being of Dasein is characterized by certain existential structures. State-of-mind is the disclosedness of the 'there' and, as such, brings Dasein before its self, *even if* Dasein is also able to evade its self. Understanding is the projective interpretation of the world in terms of the self and as such lets things be seen as they are 'there' for Dasein, *even if* Dasein is always able to transform this primordial fore-sight into the sightlessness of assertive understanding. Discourse articulates understanding and so is available to articulate a genuinely primordial understanding, *even if* Dasein, proximally and for the most part, lapses into degenerate forms of expression. In every one of the above-mentioned cases, the 'even if' expresses a possibility which is by no means a necessity and which, if it arises, is in any case a derivative possibility which, as such, depends upon the more primordial condition, indeed arises as a modification of the latter. And yet there is a tendency to reverse these ontological priorities, to make of the original something derivative, and to make of the derivative something original. And nowhere is this tendency more pronounced than with respect to the theme of authenticity, which is always presented as a step back out of the inauthenticity of *das Man*. The structure that is introduced to account for this otherwise inconsistent reversal is the structure of Falling. That the structure of Falling accomplishes this reversal is beyond question. What is questionable is whether it does not do so by way of an artificial contrivance and, much more seriously, whether this contrivance does not bring the basic ontological structures of *Being and Time* into contradiction with themselves.

To put it another way again: the reason 'world' takes Dasein away from itself is surely because the concept of 'world' in question is that false concept of world, fostered by Descartes, and enshrined in the everyday thinking of adults in advanced industrialized societies. But then, from the standpoint of *this* concept of world, being-in-the-world, in the ontologically proper sense, has already been lost. The findings of child psychology, of anthropology, of mythology etc., all confirm that there is a more original being-in-the-world for which 'world' is precisely the field for the *realization* of the self, in so far as the self projectively interprets and is affected by that which is projectively *there* for it. It is the loss of this more original concept of 'world', or the transformation of this 'world' into a matrix of objective relations which results in the self losing its primordial sense of self by, for example, coming to think of its self as something subjective. In order to accommodate such an insight, it would however be necessary to differentiate between the original 'world' and a derivative concept of, say, the *universe*.<sup>38</sup>

There can be no doubt that Heidegger is aware of this difficulty. For he addresses it explicitly in a section in which he discusses the relation of Falling and thrownness. 'Can Dasein be conceived as an entity for which, in its Being, its potentiality-for-being is an *issue*, if this entity, in its very everydayness, *has lost itself* and in Falling, "lives" away from itself?'<sup>39</sup> Heidegger answers:

But Falling into the world would be phenomenal 'evidence' against the existentiality of Dasein only if Dasein were regarded as an isolated 'I' or subject, as a self-point from which it moves away. In that case, the world would be an Object.

But his answer begs the question. Certainly, there could be no *existential* analysis of Falling if the world in which Dasein found itself were envisaged, from the first, as an objective universe. But by prefacing the subject-object relation with a more primordial way of being, it does become possible to talk of Falling as a falling away from that primordial involvement which characterizes Dasein originally. And this does imply that Dasein cannot have 'fallen' from the very beginning, or that, if it has, fallenness is originally a way of being-in-the-world which is anything but inauthentic (i.e., thrownness).

Just as serious is the following difficulty. If Dasein is, in reality, its 'there' in such a way that a potentiality for being itself is always available to it, then it is precisely as being-self, that is, as being-in-the-world, that it ceases to be itself, since the world is that into which it has fallen, by which it has been taken away from itself in the form, primarily, of being-with. But if it is *as itself* that it ceases to *be itself* then how can it ever *become itself* in the manner required by the theory of authenticity? Indeed, one can go further and ask: how can it ever even *cease* to be itself, since it has lost itself from the very beginning, and so has *never* been able to be itself?

A way to resolve the difficulty would be to disconnect the subsidiary structures of thrownness and facticity from that of Falling, to confer upon the former a genuinely ontological status and to see Falling as a secondary derivative. Here is a passage in which Heidegger defines thrownness. 'The expression "thrownness" is meant to suggest the *facticity of its being delivered over*.'<sup>40</sup> This reference back to facticity requires that we also consider how Heidegger defines the latter.

Whenever Dasein is, it is as a Fact; and the factuality of such a Fact is what we shall call Dasein's 'facticity'. The concept of 'facticity' implies that an entity 'within the world' has Being in the world in such a way that it can understand itself as bound up in its destiny

with the Being of those entities which it encounters within its own world.<sup>41</sup>

Facticity rather than thrownness or Falling is the concept with which such existential successors of Heidegger as Jean-Paul Sartre tend to operate. And in the light of their analyses we can perhaps give a more concrete sense to Heidegger's rather vague descriptions. Facticity means that I do not choose to be or choose who I am to be but simply find myself already in the world as given to be a specific someone. There is no necessity to my existing or to my existing as *this* person. It simply happens that I find myself as that very person who I am and thrown into a world which is not of my choosing. It is this factual happening which then serves as the foundation for everything I am to make of myself. This was what Sartre meant when he used that apparently contradictory phrase 'necessary contingency'. That I am is a purely contingent fact. But this fact is the necessary foundation of my existence as an appropriation of thrown being in the world.

In fact, facticity and thrownness are really two sides of the same primary structure. Facticity focuses on the fact of being a self (that I am) while thrownness focuses upon that in which I find myself as already existing, namely, the world. They are the existential counterparts of the ontological phenomena of the 'Who' and the 'World' which, of course, belong together in the unitary configuration being-in-the-world.

Strictly speaking, there is nothing secondary about either facticity or thrownness. From the very first, Dasein finds itself delivered over to itself as already existing in a world. Whether Dasein is born into an 'advanced' industrial society or whether it is brought into a 'primitive' world, it exists, factically, as thrown being in a world. Indeed, one might almost say, animals too exist as thrown being in a world, the world of the domestic pet, the world of animal husbandry, the untamed jungle. To be sure, awareness of factual existence in a world may never come to animals and may only come later on with humans. To borrow a phrase from Bishop Berkeley, if consciousness of existence is taken as that characteristic which distinguishes Man from the Beasts, many of those who pass for Men might have to be counted amongst the latter kind. This disparity between an ontological structure and conscious awareness of that structure, as a definite and determining characteristic of Dasein, is however already allowed for by Heidegger with his talk about a pre-ontological way of being. So far from it being the case that unawareness of the fundamental structures of existence militates against the ontological character of the being whose existence is in question, awareness of existence, when it comes, is most likely to be an existentially false awareness, an awareness of self out of and by means of categories which

are appropriate not to Dasein but to beings which do not have the mode of being of Dasein.

Unlike the structure of Falling however, that of facticity (or thrownness) does not carry with it the implication of not-being-self. Facticity and thrownness simply mean that I cannot *choose* that as which I am delivered over to being. But I can *be* it all the same. On the other hand, 'Falling Being-in-the-world', Heidegger tells us, 'is not only tempting and tranquillizing; it is at the same time alienating'.<sup>42</sup> This latter characteristic is of especial interest since Heidegger concedes that 'alienation *closes off* from Dasein its authenticity'.<sup>43</sup> This suggests that, as factically existing in a world, Dasein is initially disclosed to itself as that very being which it is. The alienation of Falling, on the other hand, closes Dasein off from a being which it is actually given over to being by virtue of facticity and thrownness. So understood, Falling *could* be presented as a secondary modification of the more primordial structure of facticity. *Were* it to be so understood, the difficulties encountered above would be resolved.

These revisions are not arbitrarily recommended nor are they proposed with a view to forcing Heidegger's thinking into an alien mould. Rather, they are required in order to make Heidegger consistent with himself. To be sure, there are passages where even thrownness takes on the negative characteristics of not-being-self. 'Is not Dasein, as thrown Being-in-the-world, thrown proximally [*zunächst*] right into the publicness of the "they"?'<sup>44</sup> Heidegger asks. The answer is that, at the very most, only *adult* Dasein is proximally and for the most part thrown into the 'They' in the way Heidegger describes. This is not an incidental objection. When, in *Truth and Method*, Gadamer considers the problem of understanding and interpretation in *Being and Time*,<sup>45</sup> he specifically takes account of the problem of animals and children and admits that there are open questions still to be faced here. Perhaps it is in order to close off such questions that Heidegger himself devoted a section to 'The existential analytic and the interpretation of primitive Dasein'. Primitive Dasein, Heidegger concedes (and the same would go for children), can throw light upon human nature because '“primitive phenomena” are often less concealed', because primitive Dasein 'often speak to us more directly'.<sup>46</sup> He nevertheless still insists that 'everydayness does not coincide with primitiveness', the reason being that primitive Dasein has an everyday being of its own. But even if this is admitted, surely, the everydayness of primitive Dasein is so far removed from that of the 'Man' Heidegger has in mind that a comparison of the two would make it difficult to sustain the thesis of an original lostness in the 'They'. Surely animals, primitives and even children, do live in some primary accord with themselves and with nature, an accord which it is the very task of society to level down in such a way as to make them fit for (as being fitted into) being with one another. And possibly this levelling down is

not as negative as Heidegger makes it appear. Perhaps it even meets an ethical requirement, assuming, that is, that a relation *can* be established between ontology and a possible Ethics. But before we pursue this question further let us first turn to an examination of the procedure of individualization.

## 2 The procedure of individualization

Individualization reverses the tendency inherent in Falling. The self which says 'I' of itself has been shown, proximally and for the most part, *not* to be itself. Individualization reverses the tendency on the part of the self to evade its self, to flee from itself, to let itself be absorbed in *das Man*, by bringing the self face to face with itself, that is, before its ownmost potentiality for being itself.

Of course, if Falling is an ontological characteristic and, as such, one which determines the being of Dasein from the very beginning, the very possibility of being-self becomes eminently problematic, as we have seen. It is noteworthy therefore that Heidegger addresses this quite specific difficulty in the very section (§40) in which he introduces the concept of individualization.

From an existentiell point of view, the authenticity of being-one's-Self has of course been closed off and thrust aside in Falling; but to be thus closed off is merely the privation of a disclosedness which manifests itself phenomenally in the fact that Dasein's fleeing is a fleeing in the face of itself.<sup>47</sup>

The force of Heidegger's response rests here upon the notion of a 'privative' mode.

Privative modes are a familiar item in Heidegger's analyses and are employed to indicate the derivative character of what is so described. The present-at-hand is a privative modification of the ready-to-hand. Space as an abstract system of relations (or as a container) is a privative mode of the primordial spatiality of de-severance and directionality. The ordinary conception of time is a privative mode of primordial temporality. Assertion is a privative mode of hermeneutical understanding. But elsewhere, when Heidegger describes privative modes, he first lays out the basic structures of the primordial mode in question, the ready-to-hand as such, primordial spatiality, primordial temporality, the hermeneutical 'as'. In this critical case, not only does he not do so, he *cannot* do so, due to the ontological character of Falling. Precisely there, where you would most expect an analysis of authentic being-self, prior

to the privative derivation of inauthentic not-being-self, you find the privative mode accorded the primary role.

Heidegger is aware of this difficulty and tries ingeniously to circumvent it by arguing that self-evasion is only possible in so far as the self is, in some sense, aware of that from which it flees. 'Only to the extent that Dasein has been brought before itself in an ontologically essential manner through whatever disclosedness belongs to it, can it flee in the face of that in the face of which it flees.'<sup>48</sup> The critically ambiguous phrase is 'whatever disclosedness'. Heidegger might have said that there is a pre-ontological comprehension of the self, from which the self is diverted when it falls into the 'They'. But then the structure of Falling, which is called in to account for this diversion, could not be an ontological but rather only an ontical, or at best an ontico-ontological structure. This option seems to be one which he accepts when he claims: 'This existentiell-ontical turning-away, by reason of its character as a disclosure, makes it phenomenally possible to grasp existential-ontologically that in the face of which Dasein flees, and to grasp it as such.'<sup>49</sup> The 'turning-away' in question is surely nothing but Falling, which is here characterized as something existentiell-ontical (even though Falling is supposed to be an existential structure), in order that Dasein itself should be grasped existential-ontologically in its very being; and this is given as the reason why 'in orienting our analysis by the phenomenon of Falling, we are not in principle condemned to be without any prospect of learning something ontologically about the Dasein disclosed in that phenomenon'.<sup>50</sup>

Of course, we are familiar with analyses which begin upon the ontic plane to find there the phenomenal basis for an inquiry back into the ground. Indeed, this is the standard procedure adopted throughout *Being and Time*. But the phenomenal evidence here is not 'having already fallen', from which it might be possible to inquire back into a more primordial condition where Dasein had 'not yet fallen', which latter might then be presented as that *from which* Dasein falls when it falls away. Rather, 'having always already fallen' is implied by the ontological structure of Falling which, as such, precludes the very possibility of 'not yet having fallen'.

Thus the theory of individualization is much more complicated than it appears on the surface. On the surface, individualization looks like a turning away from that not-being-self which results from Falling which, as such, can be presented as a turning back toward that very being-self from which Dasein has fallen away. But if there is no being-self from which Dasein can fall away, then it becomes questionable whether Dasein can ever actually individualize itself.

The analysis of individualization arises in relation to four problematics, *anxiety*, *death*, *conscience* and *resoluteness*. The first of these is dealt with in division one, and in connection with the structure of care, the

other three in division two. We shall examine each of these in turn before returning to the structure of the *self*.

### *Anxiety*

That in the face of which Dasein flees must have the character of the threatening. But what threatens Dasein is nothing definite, nor does it proceed from any particular region. As such it is not something of which Dasein can be afraid. Contrasting *anxiety* with *fear* not only has the function of bringing out the indefinite character of anxiety; much more important, it throws into relief its reflective character, though without appealing to structures which might be identified as 'reflective' in the traditional sense. That in the face of which Dasein shrinks back has the same character of being as the one shrinking back. But this self-sameness brings with it nothing like a reversion to self. Rather the contrary; that which Dasein is anxious about is its being-in-the-world in so far as the latter is the domain in which, and in which alone, Dasein is capable of working out its potentiality for being itself. The 'They' gives Dasein reasons for being which are not commensurate with its potentiality for becoming itself. Thus Dasein must first turn away from that turning *away* from self which characterizes Falling in order to be able to turn *toward* itself as that from which it originally turned away.

It is therefore no accident that Heidegger first introduces individualization in connection with solipsism. 'Anxiety individualizes Dasein and thus discloses it as "solus ipse".'<sup>51</sup> But the solipsism in question is the very opposite of that which features in the traditional literature. So far from bringing Dasein *to* itself by bringing it *away* from the world, indeed cutting it off entirely from the world, Dasein is now brought face to face *with* itself as being-in-the-world.

### *Death*

Part One of *Being and Time* ends with the examination of a phenomenon (care) whose function it is to ensure the wholeness of Dasein. Part Two opens with a reaffirmation of the theme of wholeness, this time in connection with the problematic of Time. Rather than moving right away into an examination of time however, Heidegger focuses instead upon the phenomenon of death. Existence presupposes life which, as such, is still not yet at an end. Death is the end of any further possibility of existing and, as such, confers a wholeness upon life itself, provided that Dasein is able to comport itself towards its end in an appropriate manner. Heidegger begins by outlining inauthentic attitudes towards death before fastening upon three characteristics which distinguish death as a genuine possibility of being and which consequently individualize Dasein down to its ownmost potentiality for being itself.

Heidegger does not explicitly mention individualization in connection

with the first of these characteristics. But the characteristic of being an ownmost possibility obviously brings with it the implication of uniqueness. The only death which I can 'anticipate' is my own, and this ownness characteristic already implies a wrenching away from *das Man*. It is the non-relational character of death which is used to reintroduce the theme of individualization. 'The non-relational character of death, as understood in anticipation, individualizes Dasein down to itself'.<sup>52</sup> The connection is also made with regard to the third characteristic, the *unüberholbarkeit* of Dasein, translated as 'not to be outstripped'. 'As the non-relational possibility, death individualizes – but only in such a manner that, as the possibility which is not to be outstripped, it makes Dasein, as being-with, have some understanding of the potentiality-for-being of Others.'<sup>53</sup> The third characteristic serves not only to shatter the tenacious hold upon existence which Dasein may ordinarily exhibit, it releases the latter for an understanding of the existence-possibilities of Others. Thus the three characteristics seem to represent three steps along the way to authentic being-toward-death, first, a wrenching away from the 'They', second, a return to self and third, a release from self for authentic being-with.

Thus being-toward-death both reveals the fallen character of Dasein, as lost in the They, and brings it face to face with the possibility of being-itself. However, being-itself as implied by being-toward-death is still only a possibility, though admittedly an ontological possibility. In being-toward-death, the possibility which I anticipate is still not an actuality and can never be so since, as an actuality, it is the impossibility of any further possibility of being. Hence the need for some phenomenon in which Dasein's ownmost potentiality for being is attested concretely. It is this shift from an ontological possibility to an ontic potentiality for being which can be phenomenally attested which then leads the way into the analysis of conscience.

### *Conscience*

Conscience, according to Heidegger, is that by means of which authentic being-one's-self is attested. As such, it is not an original phenomenon but manifests itself as an existentiell modification of the 'They'. 'Authentic Being-one's-Self takes the definite form of an existentiell modification of the "They".'<sup>54</sup> But if Dasein is originally *not* itself, then what is it that Dasein is restored *to* when it is restored to *itself*? How can Dasein ever be restored to its ownmost being-self when the existential structure of Falling precludes the possibility of an original being-self from which the self might have fallen away? Before we even attempt to answer these questions, let us first confirm that conscience is effectively a calling to self and that this calling to self is one which individualizes.

Conscience, Heidegger claims, is a mode of discourse<sup>55</sup> and it is this



existential assignment which justifies him in talking about conscience as a 'voice' and as a 'call'. Who calls? Obviously, Dasein. And to whom is the call addressed? Again, Dasein itself.<sup>56</sup> To what is one called by the voice of conscience. 'To one's *own Self*.'<sup>57</sup> In other words, in the call of conscience, Dasein is called *to* itself *by* itself *to be* its self. In order to avoid the 'metaphysical' implications of the reflectivity of conscience, Heidegger hastens to add that the self which is so called is not a subject and is therefore not turned inward upon itself when it is called but rather is called to be itself as being-in-the-world.<sup>58</sup>

The derivative character of the individualization which emerges as a result of the call of conscience is reinforced by two further features. First, Heidegger recognizes the call as coming from over and beyond. 'The call comes *from* me and yet from *beyond me and over me*.'<sup>59</sup> This over and beyond is of course not explained with reference to God or to any internalized authority but is referred back to Dasein itself. That self which has lost itself in the 'They' can only experience its own self as something alien to it. 'What could be more alien to the "They", lost in the manifold "world" of its concern, than the Self which has been individualized down to itself in uncanniness and been thrown into the "nothing"?'<sup>60</sup> Due to lostness in the 'They', the alien appears own, the own alien and it is the alienness of its ownmost self which is supposed to account for the call appearing to come from over and beyond the self.

Second, so far from stressing the positivity of being-self, Heidegger goes out of his way to emphasize its negative character. Dasein is not so much called back to itself as called away from the 'They' and this by hearing the warning of conscience which addresses Dasein as Guilty! Guilty, namely, of *not* being its self. Thus, 'in the idea of "Guilty!" there lies the character of the "not"'.<sup>61</sup> Dasein is not nor can it ever become the basis of its being. But it can and must be the being of its basis – which is itself a nullity. 'Not only is the projection, as one that has been thrown, determined by the nullity of being-a-basis; as *projection* it is itself essentially *nul*.'<sup>62</sup> Not only is the calling to self a calling away from not-being-self, the self to which Dasein is called is itself a nullity. This way of analysing the self to which Dasein is called is imposed by the primordially of Falling. And yet it leads to difficulties which can only be resolved by a species of dialectical jugglery which requires that a positive character be ascribed to negativity itself – to the point indeed, that Heidegger ends up asking a question which it is not at all typical of *Being and Time* – though it may be taken to define the entire Sartrean project in *Being and Nothingness*. 'Has anyone ever made a problem of the ontological source of notness, or, prior to that, even sought the mere conditions on the basis of which the problem of the "not" and its notness and the possibility of that notness can be raised?'<sup>63</sup>

*Resoluteness*

If there is a positive response to the call of conscience, it is to be found in resoluteness. Resoluteness is a mode of disclosedness which is attested in conscience. 'This reticent self-projection upon one's ownmost being-guilty, in which one is ready for anxiety – we call "resoluteness".'<sup>64</sup> The components of this definition already attest to the negativity of resoluteness. And yet it is often presented in positive terms. 'Resoluteness, as authentic being-one's-Self, does not detach Dasein from its world, nor does it isolate it so that it becomes a free-floating "I".'<sup>65</sup> The being-self which is referred to here is then developed in such a way that only by being itself does it become possible for Dasein to be with others authentically. 'Dasein's resoluteness towards itself is what first makes it possible to let the Others who are with it "be" in their ownmost potentiality-for-being, and to co-disclose this potentiality in the solicitude which leaps forth and liberates.'<sup>66</sup>

And yet this preliminary analysis of resoluteness is only existentiell. 'Dasein's authentic potentiality-for-being, in its existentiell attestation, has been exhibited, and at the same time existentially interpreted, as *resoluteness*.'<sup>67</sup> As such, it points forward to a more fundamental analysis which would be existential. The transition from an existentiell to an existential interpretation of resoluteness is effected with reference to the structure of anticipation. In effect, anticipation brings with it a host of considerations already dealt with previously, the wholeness of Dasein in being-towards-death, the temporality of Dasein, the nullity of Dasein. Anticipatory resoluteness brings these considerations together in an existential analysis by uniting them in the structure of care. The reappearance of the structure of care in turn makes it possible to consider the unity of the self as a unity of the totality of Dasein's structural whole.

*Care and selfhood*

It is no accident that the question of the unity of self reappears in connection with that of the structure of care at the very end of the entire theory of individualization and just before the final plunge into the theory of temporality which concludes the entire work. For, as Heidegger admits, despite the continual reference to the self, to being-self as well as to not-being-self, 'the question of the ontological constitution of Selfhood has remained unanswered'.<sup>68</sup> To some extent this critical section provides an opportunity for resuming the themes presented earlier. The connection between selfhood and care, selfhood and the wholeness of Dasein encountered in being-toward-death, are reproduced. More important, Heidegger reiterates the connection between inauthentic not-being-self and Falling. But he does so in a way which calls in question the existential character of Falling. For Falling is conceived here, quite

explicitly, as a modification of authentic being-self. 'It has been shown that proximally and for the most part Dasein is not itself but is lost in the They-self, which is an existentiell modification of the authentic Self.'<sup>69</sup> Here, the assignments are clear, an existential analysis of the authentic self and an existentiell analysis of the inauthentic self, as a modification of the former. This is of course only what one would expect. But it is in direct conflict with the ontological character of Falling. If the self is fallen from the very outset, which is the implication behind the existential character of Falling, then the inauthentic self cannot be a modification, whether existentiell or existential, of the authentic self. Rather the contrary, it is the authentic self which must be a modification of the inauthentic self.

How such a modification might indeed be possible is indicated in the substitution of the category of constancy for the traditional categories of identity, simplicity, substantiality, etc. The constancy of the self is presented as 'the authentic counter-possibility to the non-self-constancy which is characteristic of irresolute Falling'.<sup>70</sup> The implication is that Dasein lifts itself out of irresolute Falling into the 'They', not by conceiving of itself as an identical substance but by holding to whatever projects represent ownmost possibilities of being for the self. The self-identical substance self would be one which actually drifts from one mode of being to another, one way of thinking to another, and so becomes something shifting and transitory, despite its seeming self-sameness. The view of the authentic self which emerges from the characteristic of constancy as a counter-possibility to irresolute Falling, is closely related to the Sartrean view of the self as a nothingness which makes itself be by holding to those possibilities of being which it deems to be ownmost possibilities of being. There are of course elements in Heidegger's thinking which lend themselves to such an interpretation, especially the analysis of the thrown basis as a nullity. But it is entirely inconsistent with the characterization of the inauthentic self as an existentiell modification of a more primordial being-self.

So here, in this critical and conclusive chapter on the self, all the difficulties of the Heideggerian position emerge with full force. Both anticipatory resoluteness and Falling are existential structures, and yet they lead to contrary characteristics; constancy, on the one hand, and inconstancy on the other.

We have considered two solutions to this problem so far. First, due to Falling, the inauthentic self might be regarded as ontologically primary; in which case, authentic selfhood would emerge as an existentiell modification of the former. In so much as this route is adopted, the Sartrean position recommends itself. Because there is nothing like an original being-self, the self can only make itself be authentically on the basis of the nothingness of itself. Second, both authentic and inauthentic

modes of being could be ascribed to the self originally, the first clearly and explicitly, the second obscurely and implicitly. Authentic selfhood would then demand a shift of attention from the way in which the self is most readily and obviously conceived to that other way of conceiving of the self through which alone the self can come to conceive of itself authentically. No doubt this is why, earlier, Heidegger affirms the essential complementarity of resoluteness and irresoluteness. 'In anticipatory resoluteness, Dasein holds itself open for its constant lostness in the irresoluteness of the "They" – a lostness which is possible from the basis of its own Being. As a constant possibility of Dasein, irresoluteness is co-certain.'<sup>71</sup>

That neither of these two options are in fact satisfactory becomes especially clear when we encounter, once again, the problem of the hermeneutical circle. The circularity of the hermeneutical situation reappears, as a methodological issue, just prior to the investigation into selfhood, at ¶63, and it is re-introduced in the same way in which it was first introduced long ago in the Introduction: *'the entity which in every case we ourselves are, is ontologically that which is farthest'*.<sup>72</sup> The objective of an ontological Interpretation of Dasein must be to articulate a way of being which is that of Dasein, prior to the covering up which results from Falling. *'Dasein's kind of Being thus demands that any ontological Interpretation which sets itself the goal of exhibiting the phenomena in their primordially, should capture the being of this entity, in spite of this entity's own tendency to cover things up.'*<sup>73</sup> That Heidegger has in mind here not only a pre-ontological way of understanding one's self but one which is definitely linked with the way of being of pre-rational Man is indicated in a curious passage where he seems to defy his own prohibition against anthropological interpretations by exemplifying this pre-ontological understanding with reference to myth and magic.<sup>74</sup> But if it follows therefrom that an ontological investigation moves in a circle, the circularity of this procedure would only be effective in bringing to light Dasein's authentic being-self if such a way of being characterized the being of human being originally, no matter how indefinite and obscure this self-relation might be. Indeed, the very indefiniteness and obscurity of Dasein's own original self-understanding would then provide an exemplary motive for the kind of existential analyses in which Heidegger engages.

By the hermeneutical circle is meant a way of understanding for which the goal is effectively the ground, which, in moving forward toward an explicit laying out (*Auslegung*) actually only moves back toward what was already presupposed from the very beginning. But there are two *quite different ways* in which this circularity might be envisaged, one which starts upon the ontic place, moves back to the ontological ground and then forward again to the ontic; the other which starts with a pre-

ontological way of being of Dasein, moves forward to the ontic plane and then back again to a fully ontological clarification of this pre-ontological mode of being. We shall link the former with what we shall call the method of a 'regressive genesis'. We shall want to contend not only that the method of a regressive genesis fails to do justice to the radicality with which Heidegger poses the question of the being of Dasein, but that any effective resolution of the difficulties which it raises must depend upon the substitution, for this procedure, of an alternative procedure which might be called that of a 'progressive genesis'.

#### 4 Progressive versus regressive genesis

Typically, Heidegger begins his investigations in *Being and Time* upon the ontic plane, and with a description of phenomenon which are readily accessible in so far as they characterize the average everydayness of Dasein. From here, the analysis moves back to an inquiry into the ground of what has been taken for granted. Finally, in so far as a ground has been disclosed, this same ground can then be investigated in its grounding capacity, that is, as giving rise to the very phenomenon which formed the point of departure for the entire analysis. There is a circularity here. But, in as much as the analysis both departs from, and terminates upon, the ontic plane, the circularity in question might be called 'ontic' rather than 'ontological'. In so far as Heidegger employs such a method, his analyses still operate within a Husserlian configuration, to the point that as acute a critic as Tugendhat is able to call the ontological investigation of *Being and Time* a radicalized transcendental phenomenology.

Such a conception of Heidegger's ontological phenomenology (as a sort of inverted transcendental phenomenology) finds some support in *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*,<sup>75</sup> where Heidegger contrasts the Husserlian reduction with his own 'step back' from the ontic into the ontological realm. But it does not do justice to the radicality of Heidegger's procedure. For first, Heidegger's existential analyses are much more radically opposed to that way of understanding beings which is operative upon the ontic plane than are Husserl's epistemological analyses. For the most part, Husserl only wants to provide a transcendental foundation for those regions of being which are naively taken for granted in the natural attitude. The relative legitimacy of science and common sense is not called in question, only its naivety with regard to foundations. Second, by recommending his move back to a transcendental subjectivity, Husserl is only intensifying an epistemological subjectivity which he already admits. Heidegger's aim is much more radical, nothing short of an 'overcoming' of the entire metaphysics of subjectivity, consciousness, interiority, etc. It is for this reason that the ontic plane cannot provide

an unambiguous point of departure for ontological analyses. Even if the working out of the discipline of ontology comes last, a pre-ontological insight is necessary, from the very outset, as that which it is the task of an ontological investigation to bring to explicit awareness, and which guides the movement back from the very beginning. Indeed, it is only if this pre-ontological way of being is taken as the interpretative clue that the circularity of an ontological investigation can assume its proper form as a conclusive disclosure of what is initially only obscurely and indefinitely projected.

Hence the question: is there some other procedure which Heidegger might have adopted which would have avoided the difficulties which we have had to confront and which would, in consequence, confer upon his analyses a consistency which, as it stands, they lack? An answer already springs to mind in so far as it is one which has been suggested before. Beginning with a pre-ontological mode of being of Dasein which, if not fully authentic, is at least not yet committed to fallenness in the 'They', one could then envisage the latter as an *existentiell* modification. Indeed, provided one meant by 'existential modification' an *unavoidable transformation* of the very being of Dasein and not a way of being operative from the very beginning, fallenness into the 'They' could even be presented as an *existential* modification. This would, in turn, prepare the way for an account of individualization as the return to an original being-self out of the fallen condition. Such a revision would demand that we shift the emphasis from Falling to *facticity* and *thrownness* and that the latter be interpreted in such a way as to be free, at least in principle, from any commitment to inauthenticity.

The key to such a re-interpretation of the hermeneutical circle (no longer ontic–ontological–ontic but pre-ontological–ontic–ontological) lies in the notion of a pre-ontological way of being. In the Introduction, this notion is presented in connection with the metaphors of 'closeness' and 'farness'. 'Ontically Dasein is not only close to us – even that which is closest: we *are* it, each of us, we ourselves. In spite of this, or rather just for this reason, it is ontologically that which is farthest.'<sup>76</sup> Or again, 'Dasein is ontically "closest" to itself and ontologically farthest; but pre-ontologically it is surely not a stranger'.<sup>77</sup> The difficulty concealed in this somewhat mysteriously worded paradox becomes much clearer in the light of a genetic analysis. The difficulty lies in the characterization of both the ontical and the pre-ontological as 'close'. In the first citation, the difficulty is avoided simply because no mention is made of the pre-ontological. In the second however, it is avoided by the dubious strategy of a wording sufficiently ambiguous to circumvent the confusion that would otherwise arise with the double meaning of 'closest', as both pre-ontologically, and as ontically, close.

A little later, Heidegger makes another and much more satisfactory

attempt to differentiate the pre-ontological from the ontological. He presents the distinction in terms of a distinction between a way of being of Dasein and a way of thinking about this same way of being, a way of thinking enshrined in the discipline of ontology.

Here, 'Being-ontological' is not yet tantamount to 'developing an ontology'. So if we should reserve the term 'ontology' for that theoretical inquiry which is explicitly devoted to the meaning of entities, then what we have had in mind in speaking of Dasein's 'Being-ontological' is to be designated as something 'pre-ontological'.<sup>78</sup>

The further qualification which Heidegger is careful to make is specifically intended to disqualify any interpretation of the 'pre-ontological' as something ontic. 'It does not signify simply being-ontical however, but rather being in such a way that one has an understanding of being.'<sup>79</sup>

By taking the distinction between a pre-ontological way of being and the discipline of ontology more seriously than Heidegger takes it himself, we shall find ourselves in a position to develop a progressive genesis in the context of which many of Heidegger's difficulties are resolved. In particular, the theory of individualization can now be rendered more consistent with itself by representing the possibility of authentic being-self as a recuperation of a primordial possibility inherent in Dasein. The turning away from the 'They' motivated by anxiety, being-toward-death, conscience and resoluteness would, at the same time, be a turning back toward the self in its original ontological constitution.

But an even more challenging possibility can be envisaged, one which is more in line with the development of a genetic ethics and which would have the merit of *including* rather than *excluding* transcendental philosophy from the purview of a phenomenological investigation of ethical phenomena. This more challenging possibility refers to the possibility not merely of substituting a progressive for a regressive genesis but of transforming the progressive genesis in question from a *two-stage* into a *three-stage* genesis (pre-ontological-ontic-transcendental-ontological).

We have already considered two objections Heidegger brings against the working out of an (ontological) Ethics; that it is a derivative development which, as such, should be traced back to the ontological ground in which it needs to be rooted, and that it is not possible to tack on an Ethics as a sort of practical supplement. There is a third objection which bears more specifically upon the attempt to develop a *genetic* Ethics. In the context of an existential interpretation of conscience, Heidegger warns us that even the attempt to advance a material as opposed to a (Kantian) formal Ethics must fail because 'the call of conscience fails to give any such "practical" injunctions, solely because it summons Dasein to existence, to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self'.<sup>80</sup> This is a

very strange, and highly off-hand, dismissal of Scheler's achievement. Although Scheler, like Sartre, makes it his business to offer concrete examples of the way in which his principles are instantiated, such examples only serve as clarifications. They have no paradigmatic value and the conclusions drawn can always be questioned with reference to the principles laid out in the *Ethics*. Essentially, what Scheler does in his major work (*Formalism in Ethics and Non-formal Ethics of Value*), is to lay out a hierarchy of values and to found these different orders of value in correspondingly fundamental ways of envisaging the being of human being. Corresponding to the material, the vital, the spiritual and the religious dimension of human being, Scheler finds value configurations whose essential characteristics can be specified and, moreover, ordered in a logically necessary sequence.<sup>81</sup>

And surely this is not so very far from the Heideggerian project with its differentiation of the ontological from the ontic plane. There are two main differences; first, Scheler recognizes the relative legitimacy of each of the planes so distinguished, in the sense that he does not try to reduce the higher to the lower, and second, that he offers a more discriminating range of value configurations, in as much as he distinguishes four rather than two planes of being. Moreover, if, as I hope to show in my 'genetic' ethics, one reverses the order of priority established by Scheler and makes the vital configuration primary, then the material value order becomes the plane upon which an inauthentic accommodation to commonly accepted standards first becomes apparent. The spiritual and the religious value configurations then pick up the thrust of a movement away which finally brings the self back to the origin again.

With a view to laying the foundation for such a *genetic* Ethics, let us see if the resources of phenomenological philosophy do in fact permit a differentiation and a specification of the requisite planes.

First and originally, the being of human being is so constituted that it simply affirms itself as being what it is. This is the being-self the existence of which Heidegger will sometimes confirm even though, for the most part, the theoretical exigencies of the category of Falling make it difficult, or impossible, for him to recognize such an original way of being. At this level, being-self and being-in-the-world would have to be recognized as reciprocal and mutually confirming structures. As that very being which it is, the self projects possibilities of being and so finds itself in a world through which alone such possibilities can be effectively realized. But if the realization of ownmost possibilities of being is the 'ethical' goal, then, with this revision, surely we run the risk of locating the goal at the very *outset* and so of precluding the very process by which the self comes to be itself, becomes itself, as the *outcome* of the procedure of individualization?

At the risk of losing the philosophical thread, it is worth mentioning



*en passant* that any parent who has supervised the upbringing of a child knows full well the two-sided significance of just such an elementary self-affirmation. The charm of children is their spontaneity, the naturalness of their being-self. But the behaviour of most children at some time (and some children most of the time) is directed toward getting their way, to imposing themselves (for instance upon their siblings). This is so familiar a phenomenon it is not worth labouring. The Ethics that belongs to such a primordial self-affirmation is, by its very nature, not only an affirmation of the self but often also a negation of the other. It is for this reason that the child has to be taught to recognize the legitimate, even if rival, claims of the other. Adolescence represents yet another stage in life at which human being strives to realize its ownmost being self, frequently in the form of a defiance of social rules. Where this defiance takes the form of long hair, loud parties and a penchant for sex and drugs, society tends to turn a blind eye since it recognizes in these traits the symptoms of a by no means dishonourable struggle for self-realization. When it takes the form of hooliganism, on the other hand, society tries to put a stop to it. Where, in other words, self-affirmation does not imply a negation of the other, it is tolerated, where it does, it is suppressed.

Precisely because an Ethics of self-affirmation exhibits a partiality which makes of the self an absolute, the movement from this primary to a secondary plane cannot be portrayed in a purely negative light. There is a rationale to the construction of the 'They' self and that construction has an *ethical* legitimacy, the substance of which is contained in the principle of an essential accommodation to the *legitimate* wants and needs of the other. To be sure, there is a self-negation at work here too, a self-negation which leads in the direction of Heideggerian inauthenticity. But this self-negation brings with it, as its essential complement, an affirmation of the other, or rather, a freeing of the other from the absolutist claims of the self.

In my view, the Utilitarian Ethics is nothing but an elaborate working out of the implications of this self-negation which is, at the same time, an affirmation, or at least a recognition, of the legitimate claims of the other. Each is required to regard himself as one, on a par with every other. Each is required to recognize that the pleasure derived from a given quantum of goods must also be measured against the deprivation which the other suffers when those goods are assigned to himself, rather than to someone else. Each is therefore enjoined to act in such a way that the 'greatest happiness of the greatest number' is promoted. Whether or not one is prepared to go so far as to subscribe to Nietzsche's contemptuous dismissal: Man does not pursue happiness; only the Englishman does that, nevertheless, inherent in the Utilitarian Ethics we do find a principle which functions as a cautionary corrective against the excesses of self-affirming integrity. Indeed, it is only in so far as a certain *relative*

legitimacy is accorded to the 'They' and to the kind of self-discipline which the 'They' enjoins does it then become possible to raise the question of how authenticity can be recovered without surrendering that recognition of the respective claims of the other which is enshrined in the Utilitarian Ethics.

To my way of thinking, the Kantian Ethics makes a major step in the right direction by undercutting the very foundations of the Utilitarian Ethic, the attempt to found normative principles upon the naturalistic concept of happiness. For Kant, Ethics begins where the self has succeeded in so overcoming its self (its needs and its wants) that its actions are no longer motivated by considerations of personal interest or satisfaction but by a simple reflection upon the right and a determination to do what is right because it is right *and for no other reason*. If, as has been suggested, the 'They' self, when it acknowledges an ethical dimension, operates, for the most part, along Utilitarian lines, then the Kantian Ethics represents a demolition of the 'They' self. It is no longer enough simply to do *what* 'They' deem right (for instance, honesty or patriotism) since doing what is right (from the standpoint of the 'They') might actually be, and most often is, either to the advantage of the self or the community. Rather, the self has first to learn to *know* the right (by dint of rational reflection) and then to *do* the right *because* it is right, even if, in doing right, the self acts *against* its interests and finds itself at odds with everyone else. However strenuously Heidegger might resist such a connection, the theory of conscience does perform this function of leading the self back to an evaluation which is, at the very least, self engendered (rather than engendered by the 'They') and which calls the self away from what 'They' would have it be.

The difficulty with the Kantian Ethics as a paradigm of self overcoming (strictly speaking, the *second* self-overcoming since a certain self-overcoming already pertains to the self negation characteristic of the accommodation to the commonality of *das Man*) is that the connection with the being of human being is not only lost but has to be given up as a necessary condition of the self placing itself upon the requisite plane, that plane, namely, where a certain universalization of the (noumenal) self makes possible a recognition of the legitimacy of the kind of universal principles upon which the Kantian Ethics is founded. In becoming the kind of being capable of implementing the Kantian Ethics human being has first to lose the sense of itself as a concrete human being with quite specific wants and needs – or so it would seem. We know how long and how hard Kant himself struggled with this problem of what might be called the ontological evisceration of the self, to the point of admitting such barely consistent (with his own position) motivational factors as *ethical feelings*. But this only brings out that much more convincingly the need for something like a restoration of the original mode of being of

human being, a restoration which can be nothing less than a repetition, since a simple repetition would be a denial of the entire development undertaken up to that point.

The same point can be made along more Husserlian lines. If being-with (in our case existence on the objective plane) is characterized by fallenness into the 'They', then the first step toward the recovery of self must surely be *not-being-with*, holding the other at a distance, *not* letting oneself get involved with others, i.e., transcendental solipsism. To be sure, for Husserl, it is the epistemological implications of transcendental solipsism which are of interest. But if transcendental solipsism is re-interpreted along existential lines it can then be understood in the light of that relatively familiar mode of being which we call that of the 'recluse'. In the context of a genetic Ethics the implication is that at some point the individual must go through some such procedure of self-isolation if it is to win itself against the levelling tendencies inherent in the 'They'. Husserl made little attempt, in his published writings, to develop the ethical implications of transcendental phenomenology but they are certainly to be found in Scheler's own laying out of the Husserlian position.<sup>82</sup>

The same point can be made in yet another way. The reduction brings with it a self-suspension of the phenomenologist. The dis-interestedness inherent in such a self-suspension can also be envisaged as a self-detachment of the Kantian kind, that is, a detachment which makes it possible for the self to place its self upon a par with every other self and so to acknowledge the legitimacy of the principle: 'Treat every self as an end in itself'. The importance of the reflective detour as an alternative way back to the origin cannot be overestimated. It is not just that it permits us to include rather than exclude the contributions of transcendental philosophy to the discipline of Ethics; much more important than this purely *theoretical* consideration, it keeps alive the *practical* ideal of a 'higher consciousness' capable of resolving the conflicts which necessarily abound upon a more primordial plane. The 'Kingdom of Ends' may be nothing more than a Regulative Idea, but as an ethical vision, or pre-vision, it can hardly be improved upon. At the very least it serves a critical function, bringing to light the extent to which human conflict is the product of a failure to conform to the universal requirements of Reason.

However, to the self-suspension characteristic of the placement of the self upon a reflective plane something in the order of a self-realization or self-actualization must needs respond if the principle in question is to become practically effective. Nietzsche himself provided many indications as to how such a conclusive self-realization might be effected. When he recognized the artist, the philosopher and the saint as the three ideal types of human being, it was surely because these three types necessarily

subject themselves to a self-suspension, but a self-suspension of a kind which, in turn, leads on to a new kind of self-realization, a self-realization which not only does not imply a negation of the other but actually confirms and promotes an equivalent self-realization in the other.

And here we catch a glimpse of a possible *philosophical* ground for Heidegger's major historical error. For surely, whatever else he might have failed to do, Hitler did succeed in realizing his ownmost potentiality for being. A social non-entity by origin, he became the supreme head of the German state. A non-commissioned soldier, he became the head of the German army. An uneducated artist whose talent was so little appreciated that he failed to get into the Vienna school of art, he played out the artistry of his life upon the stage of world politics – with devastating consequences for the world. To very few has it been given to realize their own (no doubt sincerely held) convictions as fully and completely as Hitler. However, in realizing his own potentiality for being, he severely curtailed, when he did not annihilate altogether, the potentiality for being of others.

This is surely the point of Jaspers' comment in his *Notizen zu Martin Heidegger* (§157) where he objects: '“Resoluteness”, but with respect to what?'<sup>83</sup> It is the vacuousness of the principle which constitutes the problem. Heidegger could be excused for not having specified concrete forms of behaviour as exemplary instances of resoluteness but he might at least have furnished *criteria* for determining, in any given instance, whether a specific form of behaviour did or did not meet the legitimate requirements of resoluteness. The defence that Heidegger was offering an evaluatively neutral account of resoluteness simply does not stand up to a close examination of the numerous passages in which the concept figures. The supposedly neutral descriptions are undoubtedly evaluative recommendations and were intended as such. But if an ethics of authenticity is implied it becomes absolutely crucial to provide criteria for assessing the viability of that toward which resoluteness is directed.

As we have seen, the difficulty with an Ethics of Authenticity is not that it calls the self back to its ownmost being-self but that there can be nothing like a direct regression to such an original way of being. For any attempt to effect such an 'ontic regression' cannot but bring with it 'primitive' implications – in the worst sense of that word. In place of such an 'ontic regression' we have therefore sought to recommend something in the order of a 'reflective detour', a detour which first takes human being even further *away* from its self (and from others) in order, *on that basis*, to be able, eventually, to bring human being back to itself again in a *genuinely* authentic way.

The difference between an 'objective regression' and the 'reflective detour' can be brought out as follows: in as much as the placement of the self upon an ontic plane (fallenness in the 'They') represents a split

within the self, or a negation of the self by itself (as fallen, the self is *not* itself; 'not-being-itself' being precisely what 'They' want the self to be), the 'objective regression' heals the split in the most straightforward way. The self simply steps back out of this state of self-alienation and so is restored to itself again. The 'reflective detour', on the other hand, requires that the self first aggravate the split within itself, carry this division to the ultimate limit of a 'solipsistic' self-universalization and then, having done so, go on to *overcome* this very same abstraction of itself from itself – so that the movement of return which, in one sense, restores the self to itself again, in another, merely takes the self ever farther from itself by reversing the progressive dynamic of the entire genesis.<sup>84</sup>

Nothing is more problematic in existential philosophy than the question of authenticity – and nothing is more important. In defence of an ethics of authenticity we have tried to show first, that without some original concept of being-self, the entire project is vitiated from the very outset; second, that the positing of such an original being-self calls for a progressive analysis of Fallenness into the 'They'; and third, that the eventual regression to being-self is one which has to include a 'reflective detour' if it is to avoid the 'primitive' implications of an 'ontic' or 'objective' regression. The long, indeed very long, detour which we have tried to outline in the name of a 'genetic ethics' is indeed a laborious alternative to the sweet simplicity of the Heideggerian directive. But in philosophy, as in life itself, the more indirect the way, the more certain it is that it will arrive at the desired goal, and this not just because the *goal is the way* but because the goal is the (way to the) ground and the ground, the (way to the) goal.

## Notes

1 Martin Heidegger, *Brief über den 'Humanismus'*, GA 9 (*Gesamtausgabe*, Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, hereinafter referred to as GA), S. 349.

2 For example, *Sein und Zeit* 167 (tr. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson as *Being and Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962)) where Heidegger insists: 'our interpretation has a purely ontological intention, and is far removed from any moralizing critique of everyday Dasein.'

3 Heidegger, *Brief über den 'Humanismus'*, GA 9, S. 349.

4 Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 354 (H. 316).

5 Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, GA 40, tr. Ralph Manheim as *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), p. 164.

6 *ibid.*, p. 165.

7 Perhaps the most cogent and certainly the most poignant study of authenticity in Camus is to be found not in his philosophical writings but in his novel, *La chute*.

8 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, tr. Philip Mairet (London: Methuen, 1948); Heidegger, *Brief über den 'Humanismus'*, S. 325.

9 In *Vom Wesen des Grundes*, GA 9, the issue gets more complicated. In the section itself also headed 'Vom Wesen des Grundes', Heidegger first distinguishes three ways of grounding: (1) ground as instituting, (2) ground as taking up a position, (3) ground as grounding, to finish up with a threefold distribution of the ground as world projection, absorption in beings and ontological grounding of beings.

10 Martin Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, GA 3, tr. James Churchill as *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 4.

11 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 70 (H. 44).

12 *ibid.*, p. 149 (H. 114).

13 *ibid.*, p. 151 (H. 115–16).

14 *ibid.*, p. 150 (H. 116).

15 *ibid.*, p. 168 (H. 130).

16 *ibid.*

17 *ibid.*, p. 168 (H. 130).

18 In her paper on 'Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty' (chap. 30, vol. II of the present work), Christina Schües argues that there are, in the first instance, only two existentialia, *State-of-mind* and *Understanding*. To be sure, she admits the existential status of *Discourse* (while ignoring this third constitutive structure for practical purposes), but she treats *Falling*, and with some good reason, as a 'modification' of the two basic existentialia. But far from relieving the difficulties connected with the status of falling, she too finds this notion incoherent, especially when the analysis is extended to take in the thematic of time, where it requires from Heidegger an 'authentic' falling!

19 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 220 (H. 176).

20 *ibid.*, p. 224 (H. 179).

21 *ibid.*, p. 182 (H. 142).

22 *ibid.*, p. 203 (H. 161).

23 *ibid.*, p. 201 (H. 158).

24 *ibid.*, p. 184 (H. 144).

25 *ibid.*, p. 186 (H. 145).

26 *ibid.*, p. 186 (H. 146).

27 *ibid.*, p. 186 (H. 146).

28 *ibid.*, p. 161 (H. 124).

29 *ibid.*, p. 174 (H. 135).

30 *ibid.*, p. 175 (H. 136).

31 *ibid.*, p. 156 (H. 120).

32 *ibid.*, p. 164 (H. 126).

33 *ibid.*, p. 165 (H. 128).

34 *ibid.*, p. 220 (H. 176); cf. Heidegger, *Brief über den 'Humanismus'*, S. 329.

35 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 220 (H. 176).

36 *ibid.*, p. 76 (H. 50).

37 *ibid.*, p. 223 (H. 178).

38 In my own ontological phenomenology (*Being and Becoming* (for details see vol. I, chap. 4, n. 46 of the present work)), I operate with three concepts of the Other in general; the concept of world, to cover the first and originary stage, the concept of universe, to cover the second and objective stage and the concept of field, to cover the third and reflective stage. The latter I owe to Gurwitsch and his study of *The Field of Consciousness*.

- 39 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 223 (H. 179).
- 40 *ibid.*, p. 220 (H. 176), see also ¶38.
- 41 *ibid.*, p. 82 (H. 56).
- 42 *ibid.*, p. 222 (H. 178).
- 43 *ibid.*
- 44 *ibid.*, p. 210 (H. 167).
- 45 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1965), S. 249.
- 46 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 76 (H. 51).
- 47 *ibid.*, p. 229 (H. 184).
- 48 *ibid.*
- 49 *ibid.*, p. 229 (H. 185).
- 50 *ibid.*, p. 229 (H. 185).
- 51 *ibid.*, p. 233 (H. 188).
- 52 *ibid.*, p. 308 (H. 264).
- 53 *ibid.*, p. 309 (H. 264).
- 54 *ibid.*, p. 312 (H. 267).
- 55 *ibid.*, p. 314 (H. 269).
- 56 *ibid.*, p. 317 (H. 272).
- 57 *ibid.*, p. 317 (H. 273).
- 58 *ibid.*, p. 318 (H. 273).
- 59 *ibid.*, p. 320 (H. 275).
- 60 *ibid.*, pp. 321–2 (H. 277).
- 61 *ibid.*, p. 329 (H. 283).
- 62 *ibid.*, p. 331 (H. 285).
- 63 *ibid.*, p. 322 (H. 277).
- 64 *ibid.*, p. 342 (H. 296–7).
- 65 *ibid.*, p. 344 (H. 298).
- 66 *ibid.*, p. 344 (H. 298).
- 67 *ibid.*, p. 349 (H. 302).
- 68 *ibid.*, p. 365 (H. 317).
- 69 *ibid.*, p. 365 (H. 317).
- 70 *ibid.*, p. 369 (H. 322).
- 71 *ibid.*, p. 356 (H. 308).
- 72 *ibid.*, p. 359 (H. 311).
- 73 *ibid.*, p. 359 (H. 311).
- 74 *ibid.*, p. 261 (H. 313).
- 75 Heidegger, GA 24, tr. Albert Hofstadter as *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 21.
- 76 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 36 (H. 15).
- 77 *ibid.*, p. 37 (H. 16).
- 78 *ibid.*, p. 32 (H. 12).
- 79 *ibid.*
- 80 *ibid.*, p. 340 (H. 294).
- 81 In his *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materielle Wertethik* (tr. as *Formalism in Ethics and Non-formal Ethics of Value* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973)), Scheler not only lays out a hierarchy of values but ties these value configurations (physical, vital, spiritual and religious) down to the intrinsic constitution of human being itself. Given Heidegger's regressive methodology he would only have been able to follow Scheler a very short way along this path, had he even been prepared to contemplate a line of thought following the Schelerian directive. More specifically, one might say that his explicit

dismissal of the ontic dimension represents an implicit critique of physical values and the ethics to which they lead (Utilitarianism) in favour of vital values (a hypothesis which partly explains his fascination with the thinking of a Nietzsche). But the spirit of Scheler's enterprise moves in the opposite direction (and disregarding for the moment the, in my view, misplaced fundamentality accorded to the physical as opposed to the vital stratum), from the lower to the higher, from the physical and the vital toward the spiritual and the religious, and this without any disconnection or disjunction of the order of values from the being who posits such values as expressive of dimensions of its very own being. In other words, for Scheler, and for those who, like myself, would like to follow in Scheler's footsteps, there can be the 'higher' value orders only because these orders already 'exist' as constitutive of the very being of that being which projects such a value order, a being for whom, consequently, the ethical domain arises necessarily as a legitimate way of conceiving of, and, more important, of working out and developing, a distinctively human existence.

82 Alois Roth's *Edmund Husserls Ethische Untersuchungen, Phaenomenologica* (The Hague: Nijhoff) brings out the connection between Husserl's lectures on Ethics and the ethical philosophy developed by Scheler himself.

83 Karl Jaspers, *Notizen zu Martin Heidegger* (München/Zurich: Piper, 1989), p. 176.

84 What can only be outlined in a few words here forms the topic of my genetic theory of inter-personal relations, which is itself grounded in the several stages of the ontological genesis of human being. More specifically, the first and originary stage is developed under the rubric of a theory of *Empathy*, the second and objective stage, under the rubric of a theory of *Alienation*, the third and reflective stage, under the rubric of a theory of *Isolation* and the fourth and conclusive stage, under the rubric of a theory of *Sympathy*. Sympathetic inter-personal relations thereby assume the form of a recuperation of empathic relations, subject however to the detour through *alienation* and *isolation*. However long and complicated the presentation of such a movement must necessarily be, the underlying principle is very simple: becoming-self cannot be accomplished in any simple and straightforward way (and if such a way is adopted it will have 'primitive' implications – in the worst sense of that word) but has to assume the laborious form of a massive detour, a detour which necessarily includes moments which seem to be self-defeating, in the sense that they *seem* to take the self farther away from, rather than closer to, its self.



## The place of the work of art in the age of technology

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Kathleen Wright

But where danger threatens  
That which saves from it also grows.

Hölderlin, 'Patmos'<sup>1</sup>

For Heidegger the question of the essence of technology (*Technik*) is intimately related to the question of the essence of art. And yet he claims that 'the more questioningly we ponder the essence of technology, the more mysterious [*geheimnisvoller*] the essence of art becomes'.<sup>2</sup> What is the relation between art and technology? It is Hölderlin's poem, 'Patmos', that reveals to Heidegger the way to understand the relation between art and technology. Art grows out of the 'danger' of technology as a 'saving power'. Thus art is related to, yet distinct from, technology as a saving power is related to, yet distinct from, the danger from which it saves us. Yet why does Heidegger then claim that the essence of art becomes 'more mysterious [*geheimnisvoller*]'? Does Heidegger mean that even if we undertake to think what is dangerous in the essence of technology, in the end what can rescue us from this danger will not only remain a mystery but also become more mysterious? If this is what Heidegger means, why should we even begin to question technology? What does this claim mean?

For Heidegger technology is 'planetary' and its danger 'homelessness' (*Heimatlosigkeit*). Given this danger, what has been translated as 'mysterious', the German word 'geheimnisvoll', can assume the opposite meaning, 'filled with the familiar, the home-like' (*geheim, heimlich, heimisch*). 'Geheimnisvoll' can indeed mean both the familiar and the mysterious,<sup>3</sup> and if Heidegger is right, that 'homelessness is coming to be the destiny of the world',<sup>4</sup> then it will be precisely the familiar that is mysterious. In light of this reading of the word, 'geheimnisvoll', Heidegger's claim is the following: the more we question the homelessness of

technology, the more we find in art a dwelling. But can this claim be justified? Does it not presuppose that the realm of art is safe from the danger of technology? Why should works of art be free from homelessness?

To clarify Heidegger's claim, I shall explore in this paper how Heidegger would respond to an issue raised by Walter Benjamin's essay, 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction' (1936). Heidegger could not have read this work when he wrote 'The origin of the work of art' in 1935. Although what Heidegger says in 'The age of the world picture' (1938) might well be in response to Benjamin's essay, this is unlikely. Rather it seems that both Benjamin's essay and Heidegger's two works respond to the same short piece by Paul Valéry, 'The conquest of ubiquity'. Benjamin begins with this piece, and Heidegger, who corresponded with Valéry, speaks in 'The age of the world picture' of 'the conquest of the world as picture [*Bild*]'.<sup>5</sup>

I shall limit my discussion to the issue of the *place* of the work of art in the age of technology. First I shall draw on Valéry and Benjamin to pose the question of place in terms of the alternatives of *cult site* or *exhibition setting*. I shall argue that what Heidegger calls in 'Art and space' (1969) the *place (Ort)*<sup>5</sup> of the work of art in the age of technology can no longer be the cult site. Next I shall consider the second alternative within the context of the larger set of questions raised by Heidegger about modern science, metaphysics, and technology. While acknowledging that the exhibition setting does indeed replace the cult site, I shall argue that for Heidegger the exhibition setting displaces the work of art, and that this displacement or homelessness of the work of art discloses in an exemplary way the essence of the modern age of technology. Finally I shall examine three of Heidegger's discussions of particular works of art: in 'Art and space', the anonymous work of sculpture; and in 'The origin of the work of art', the Van Gogh painting of the peasant shoes, and the temple. I shall argue that for Heidegger it is within and out of the displacement of the work of art in the age of technology that an alternative to place as cult site or exhibition setting emerges, an alternative which exemplifies what is for Heidegger the saving power of art. In 'Art and space', Heidegger says that there is as yet no name to distinguish this new conception of place. I shall however draw on Heidegger's frequent use of a line from Hölderlin's 'In lovely blueness . . .': 'Full of acquirements, but poetically, man dwells on this earth',<sup>6</sup> and shall call this place (*Ort*) a *dwelling place*.

Benjamin's essay is introduced by and comments on the following statement from Valéry's 'The conquest of ubiquity':

Our fine arts were developed, their types and uses were established, in times very different from the present, by men whose power of

action upon things was insignificant in comparison with ours. But the amazing growth of our techniques, the adaptability and precision they have attained, the ideas and habits they are creating, make it a certainty that profound changes are impending in the ancient craft of the Beautiful. In all the arts there is a physical component which can no longer be considered or treated as it used to be, which cannot remain unaffected by our modern knowledge and power. For the last twenty years neither matter nor space nor time has been what it was from time immemorial. We must expect great innovations to transform the entire technique of the arts, thereby affecting artistic invention itself and perhaps even bringing about an amazing change in our very notion of art.<sup>7</sup>

Where Valéry attributes both the actual transformation of the 'entire technique of the arts' and the potential change of 'our very notion of art' to the revolutionary interpretation of matter, space, and time by quantum and relativity theory, Benjamin attributes the actual transformation of our notion of art to the 'first truly revolutionary means of reproduction, photography'. Valéry's piece is concerned with the 'immemorial alliance' between music and physics, and therefore concentrates on music as the 'first to be transformed in its methods of transmission, reproduction, and even production'. He notes that the control of visual phenomena, although not yet so advanced, will soon follow and predicts finally that 'works of art will acquire a kind of ubiquity'. Here 'ubiquity' means that no matter when, no matter where, the reproduced works of art can privately accompany 'men and women who are very much alone'.<sup>8</sup>

Benjamin, like Valéry, greets the technical transformation of the transmission, reproduction, and production of works of art, together with its consequence, the ubiquity of works of art, enthusiastically. While acknowledging the phenomenon of recording, Benjamin is above all concerned with the 'revolutionary' means of mechanical reproduction, photography, including silent and sound filming. In contrast to other means of reproduction (stamping, woodcutting, engraving, etching, lithographing, even printing), photography is 'revolutionary' not because now *all* visible works of art are in principle reproducible, but rather because the increased quantity of reproductions of each individual work of art brings with it a revolutionary change in 'the quality of the presence of the authentic art work', which Benjamin calls the 'aura'. Let us examine Benjamin's claim further for it is this claim – that the quality of the original work of art is diminished, not the quality of the reproduction – that might seem to challenge Heidegger's understanding of how the art work 'works', that is, discloses Being, in 'The origin of the work of art'

as well as his claim that art can be a saving power in the age of modern technology.

Benjamin defines the *aura*, the quality of the presence of an authentic work of art, in the following way: 'the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be.'<sup>9</sup> According to Benjamin, the aura of an authentic work of art originates from its 'cult value', that is, from its use within a ritual, be this magical, religious, or more recently secular (the cult of the beautiful).<sup>10</sup> The authenticity of the original work of art depends on its 'presence in time and space, its unique existence [*sein einmaliges Dasein*] at the place [*Ort*] where it happens to be'.<sup>11</sup> While Benjamin makes authenticity just as dependent on presence in time as presence in space, I am concerned here with 'place' and how the 'place', the presence in a position in space, ultimately *secures* the authentic work's aura, 'the unique phenomenon of distance, however close it [the work of art] is'. Benjamin observes that in the age of mechanical reproduction initiated by the invention of photography, the authentic work of art loses its aura, the how or the quality of its presence. Benjamin attributes this loss to 'the technique of reproduction [which] detaches the reproduced object [the authentic art work] from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence.'<sup>12</sup> Given the 'tremendous shattering of tradition' which Benjamin ascribes to mechanical reproduction by photography, the authentic work of art belongs *nowhere*.

To distinguish Benjamin's conclusion from that of Valéry, we can say that ubiquity has conquered the uniquely existing work of art. The ubiquity of the technical reproductions, that they can be exhibited and viewed anywhere and everywhere, transforms the 'place' of the uniquely existent work of art into *no place*, literally, *ou-topos*. Its cult site becomes *utopian*.<sup>13</sup> Thus we may conclude that for Benjamin, ubiquity does not merely add to but instead *displaces* and *replaces* the 'unique existence at the place where it [the original work of art] happens to be'. The place of the work of art in reproduction is ubiquitous; it can be set up on exhibition anywhere and everywhere.

Instead of cult value, art works gain, Benjamin says, 'exhibition value'. Like film, which is created for reproduction and exhibition, art works will be designed for and evaluated in terms of their reproducibility, not their uniqueness. In contrast to Valéry, for whom the ubiquity of reproduced works was a private matter of individual choice, for Benjamin their ubiquity becomes a public matter and a social force. Benjamin concludes that the 'total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice-politics'.<sup>14</sup> Thus the technology of reproduction (photography, including film) transforms both the function of art and the very notion of an art work. In respect

to the question of place, Benjamin's essay suggests as the only alternative to the cult site the ubiquitous setting of exhibition.

Heidegger, like Valéry and Benjamin, acknowledges the need to question anew 'our very notion of art' in the age of modern technology. Like Benjamin, he recognizes the inadequacy of aesthetics, which takes works of art to be 'objects of an aesthetic experience'. Moreover he would agree with Benjamin's explanation of the social causes for the ubiquity of reproduced art works: 'the desire of contemporary masses to bring things "closer" spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality [here, original work of art] by accepting its reproduction'.<sup>15</sup> Heidegger, however, would question whether works of art can be brought 'closer' *humanly* if, in being brought 'closer' *spatially*, their uniqueness is overcome.

In 'The origin of the work of art', the uniqueness of a work plays an important role. There it is one of the two ways to distinguish ontologically between a work of art and a tool (a piece of equipment). According to Heidegger, the createdness (*Geschaffensein*) of an art work differs from the readiness (*Fertigkeit*, better-finishedness) of a tool by 'the uniqueness of the fact that it [the work of art] is rather than is not'.<sup>16</sup> On the basis of 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction', it might seem that this uniqueness cannot be sustained after photography, that this therefore cannot distinguish work from tool, and that ultimately Heidegger's distinction between art and technology cannot be maintained.

It is easy to confuse 'the uniqueness of the fact that it [the original work of art] is rather than is not' discussed by Heidegger with 'the unique existence at the place where it [the original work of art] happens to be' discussed by Benjamin, and therefore to mistake what Heidegger proposes for a return to what Benjamin has described as the cult value of the work of art complete with aura. Moreover his choice of a temple in 'The origin of the work of art', together with his statement that the presence of the god defines the precinct (*Bezirk*) of the temple as a holy precinct, encourages such a confusion. While it is true that Heidegger ultimately holds that 'only a god can save us',<sup>17</sup> he also recognizes, in the words of Hölderlin's 'Patmos', that 'Near is/and difficult to grasp, the God'.<sup>18</sup> Thus for Heidegger, the flight or loss of the god(s) (*Entgötterung*),<sup>19</sup> that is, secularization, is a phenomenon essential to an understanding both of the modern age, the age of technology, and of the saving power of the work of art in this age.

In his discussion of the *displacement* (*Versetzung*) of art works when collected, exhibited, or even at their 'own site', Heidegger shows that he already agrees with Benjamin that the quality of the presence of authentic works of art has decayed. Moreover Heidegger concludes that: 'World-withdrawal and world-decay can never be undone.' Thus when

Heidegger raises as a question, 'Where does a work belong?', and maintains that: 'The work belongs, as work, uniquely within the realm [*Be-reich*] that is opened up by itself,'<sup>20</sup> he cannot be advocating that the 'place' of a work of art is the site of a cult. This, he would agree with Benjamin, has become utopian. Nor is he, however, advocating that the only 'place' remaining for the work of art in the age of technology is the ubiquitous exhibition setting, a 'place' which remains basically the same whether it be used for public and political or private and aesthetic purposes.

To understand why Heidegger claims for the work of art in the age of technology a 'place' other than the ubiquitous setting of exhibition and to clarify further his claim that the work of art opens up a dwelling place, we can ask how Heidegger would account for the revolutionary event described by Benjamin. To begin with, Heidegger would not agree with Benjamin that the cause of the decay of the aura, of the world of the original work of art is that photography replaces unique creations, works of art, through reproduction. Rather Heidegger would argue that the cause of this decay is modern science which replaces the world as a unique *ens creatum* through representation (*Vorstellen*). Accordingly, the 'revolution' which Benjamin attributes to the invention of photography would be for Heidegger only a special case, although an extreme case, of the 'revolution' that took place with the discovery of modern science. It would be an extreme case inasmuch as it brings to completion and thus discloses the limits of this revolution. In what sense would Heidegger understand the revolution described by Benjamin to be only a special case of the modern scientific revolution?

In 'The age of the world picture', as well as in his 1935-6 university lecture, 'Basic questions of metaphysics', Heidegger discusses the essence of the mathematical project of Galileo and Newton, of *representation* as the '*mente concipere*' ('I conceive in my mind') and its foundation in the metaphysics of Descartes and Kant. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger had already analyzed the distinctive kind of 'making-present' that goes together with representation. We are concerned now with the distinctive kind of taking of 'place' that goes together with this 'setting' of an object before and for a subject. Heidegger points out that in Aristotelian physics, there was 'an essential difference between the motion of celestial bodies and earthly bodies. The domains of these motions are different. How a body moves depends upon its species and the place to which it belongs. The *where* determines the *how* of its being. . . .'<sup>21</sup> With modern physics, in the words of Alexandre Koyré, what was conceived of as 'a differentiated set of innerworldly places' becomes geometrized, yielding the 'essentially infinite and homogeneous extension'<sup>22</sup> called space. This new concept of space is related in turn to new concepts of body (all bodies are essentially the same), of motion (motion is rectilinear; circular

motion is a special case of rectilinear motion), and finally of *place*. The new concept of position (*locus*) replaces Aristotle's concept of place (*topos*).

The mathematical project of modern natural science discovers a 'new world', one where 'every place is equal to every other'. Nowhere is there a 'where', a 'place', which determines the how, the quality, of something's being. Everywhere there is position; nowhere is there place. To use our former distinction, position is ubiquitous; place becomes utopian. The metaphysics of Descartes and Kant provide the philosophical foundation for this new concept of position in space. Neither philosopher questions the geometrization of space and the concept of position that belongs together with space so conceived. For both geometrized space is *a priori*. They differ from one another, however, in their account of the *a priori* – here the geometrized form of the representation of space. For Descartes, it is human thinking grounded transcendently in God's thinking; for Kant, it is human thinking grounded transcendently in itself that accounts for the *a priori*.

With Descartes, the mind which is non-spatial is removed from the world which is extended. Yet as a thinking thing, the human mind can represent to itself the idea of what is extended, space, as well as ideas of what are extended in space, bodies, including its own. Space, as 'I conceive in my mind', is geometrized. So too is position and extension, the relation between two positions (or locations) in space.<sup>23</sup> For Descartes, God ultimately guarantees that what the mind represents to itself clearly and distinctly does represent the extended world and the bodies included in it. Not only is God not a deceiver. God is also a geometrician. The Book of Nature is a book of geometry.

With Kant, the existence of God is indemonstrable; thus God is not an available concept to insure that space, position in space, and extension are as I conceive them to be. A different and more complex explanation is required. Kant makes a distinction between the outer and the inner sense: 'By means of the outer sense, a property of our mind, we represent to ourselves objects *as* outside us, and all without exception in space.'<sup>24</sup> The inner sense, in contrast, has the form of time. Kant maintains that 'since the outer sense gives us nothing but mere relations, this sense can contain in its representation *only the relation of an object to a subject*, and not the inner properties of the object in itself.'<sup>25</sup> Here he is arguing not only that the objects which we know do not represent the 'things in themselves', but also that the relations, for example, 'of locations [*Orte*] in an intuition (extension)' and 'of change of location [*Ort*] (motion)',<sup>26</sup> are not 'in themselves', but *are only insofar as they are related to, that is, represented by a subject*. The geometrized form of space and the concepts of position (location) and extension that go together with it are

'objectively valid' insofar as it is only in conformity with this form that something is an object for the subject.

For Descartes, the mind is 'the mirror of nature'.<sup>27</sup> What the mind represents to itself 'pictures' something 'outside' itself, the original world space (and time), along with the bodies and events within it. The 'original' world space, however, still exists independently of its 'representation', of its being conceived. As an *ens creatum*, it depends only on God for its being. Kant, however, reaches a different conclusion: 'It is, therefore, solely from the human standpoint that we can speak of space, of extended things, etc. If we depart from the subjective condition under which alone we can have outer intuition . . . the representation of space stands for nothing whatsoever.'<sup>28</sup> There is no 'original' world space apart from its 'representation' by the subject. World space is conceived to be and exists only from the human standpoint. It is in this sense that Heidegger speaks of the modern age as one in which the world and its space is ultimately conquered *as representation, as picture*. With Kant's 'Copernican revolution', the 'conquest of the world as picture' initiated by modern science reaches its metaphysical completion.

I have said that the technical revolution of photography which Benjamin holds responsible for the decay of the aura of original works of art would be for Heidegger only a special case of the revolution in science and metaphysics described above. I have shown that for Benjamin the aura – the quality of the presence – of the authentic art work depends on the work's 'unique existence at the place [*Ort*] where it happens to be'. Benjamin argues that what is revolutionary about photography is that it first makes possible the removal of works of art into the exhibition setting. Heidegger would agree, as I have argued, that works of art are everywhere replaced by their pictorial representation, by the photograph, the film (including television), the slide, the book plate, the print, the postcard, and even the postage stamp (in Italy). Moreover Heidegger would agree with Benjamin that the exhibition setting has everywhere replaced the cult site. But Heidegger would disagree with Benjamin's account of how the exhibition setting replaces the cult site.

Benjamin has argued that because photography makes possible many exhibition settings, the cult site loses its privileged position. For Benjamin, 'cult site' is conceived of as the same kind of place as 'exhibition setting'. It differs from an exhibition setting only in that it is one where the latter is many and ubiquitous. Benjamin conceives of the 'place' of the work of art before and in the age of technology solely as 'position' (*locus*). Heidegger would argue instead that 'cult site' is a different kind of place from 'exhibition setting'. A cult site is a *topos*, a 'where' that determines the 'how' of something's being. An exhibition setting is a *locus*, a position in space equal to any other position. Heidegger would explain the fact that exhibition setting replaces cult site as the displace-



ment of *topos* and the replacement of *topos* by *locus*. This displacement and replacement occurs independently of whether the *topos* or site is the work's 'original place' or its place in the museum, the site of the cult of the beautiful.

Heidegger would conclude that the technical revolution described by Benjamin is ultimately to be explained as a special case of the revolution initiated by modern science. The modern concept of position in space, victorious in the domain of the natural world, now conquers the domain of the non-natural, the realm of art. Moreover Heidegger would have also to conclude that the technical conquest of the original work of art 'as photograph' completes 'the conquest of the world', the original *ens creatum*, 'as picture'. These two conclusions, however, would seem to deny to art a saving power given the homelessness which Heidegger finds to be the *danger* of modern technology. Heidegger would grant that works of art are not *exempt* from homelessness. Whether collected privately, exhibited publicly, or visited at their own site, works of art are displaced in their 'exhibition setting'. Given that Heidegger has said that 'World-withdrawal and world decay can never be undone', if art is to be a *saving power*, art must *grow into* a saving power. Art grows into a saving power *first*, by warning us *in an exemplary way* of the essence of modern technology and its danger, homelessness, and *second*, by disclosing an altogether different conception of place, of a *dwelling place*. The remainder of this paper will be devoted to these two issues and to Heidegger's claim that art grows into a saving power.

First, how does the displacement of the work of art and its attendant loss of aura in the age of the technology of photography serve to warn us of the essence of modern technology and its danger? In the 'Age of the world picture', Heidegger maintains that: 'The world picture does not change from an earlier medieval one into a modern one, but rather the fact that the world becomes a picture at all is what distinguishes the essence of the modern age.'<sup>29</sup> While it is this fact that *distinguishes* the modern age, it is Enframing, *Gestell*, which Heidegger *identifies* with the essence of the modern age. Even though modern machine technology emerges later than modern science, Heidegger claims that the essence of modern technology governs both modern science and its philosophical foundation. The age of the world picture is the age of Enframing, of the essence of technology. What does Heidegger mean by the essence of technology and why does he call it Enframing, *Gestell*?

In ordinary usage, *Gestell* refers to some kind of framework or apparatus. However, Heidegger's name for the essence of modern technology is not this collective noun used for what is common to many kinds of technical apparatus: 'The essence of technology is by no means anything technological.'<sup>30</sup> By the 'essence' (*Wesen*) of technology, Heidegger does not mean what it is (*quidditas*). Instead Heidegger claims that 'It is

technology itself that makes the demand on us to think in another way what is usually understood by “essence”’.<sup>31</sup> By ‘essence’ of technology, Heidegger means the way technology is present and reigns (*wesen*, a verb). The essence of ‘technology’ names a way of presencing that *masters* and *secures* all that comes to presence as an object for a subject. According to Heidegger, *Gestell* is deeply connected to the modern concept of representation (*Vorstellen*), which he characterizes as follows: ‘[O]f oneself to set [*stellen*] something before oneself and to make secure [*sicherstellen*] what has been set in place [*das Gestellte*], as something set in place.’<sup>32</sup> Heidegger uses *Gestell* in a new way to gather together the ordinary language use of the *stellen* verbs, roughly equivalent in English to the verbs of ‘setting’. I am concerned here with how ‘place’ is taken in the ‘setting in place’ of technology.

In ‘The question concerning technology’, Heidegger describes one case of the ‘setting in place’ of technology:

The hydroelectric plant is set [*gestellt*] into the current of the Rhine. It sets [*stellt*] the Rhine to supplying its hydraulic pressure, which then sets [*stellt*] the turbines turning. This turning sets those machines in motion whose thrust sets going [*herstellt*] the electric current for which the long-distance power station and its network of cables are set up [*bestellt*] to dispatch electricity.<sup>33</sup>

By the essence of technology, *Gestell*, Heidegger does not mean what is set in place, the assembly of machines described here that constitute the physical plant. Nor does he mean the network of interlocking ‘causal’ relations that takes place once the physical plant is set in place: that the plant causes the Rhine river to supply hydraulic pressure, that the hydraulic pressure then causes the generation of electricity, which finally causes the power station to supply electricity long distances. Technology is present and reigns before the functioning of the hydroelectric plant, and even before the constructing and setting into place of the plant. Before these can be set up and set in motion, technology is present and reigns in the *take over* of the ‘place’, the Rhine river, to be the ‘setting’ for a hydroelectric plant. Furthermore, technology continues to be present and to reign even at those ‘places’ where the river is not set to work. As set up by the tourist industry, the ‘place’ of the Rhine river is *taken over* as a ‘setting’ for sight-seeing and leisure activities. *Taken over* and *conquered* as a ‘setting’ or ‘place for us’, the Rhine river is then set upon and set to supplying our needs, whether for work or for play. The essence or reign of technology *takes over and occupies places*. It *conquers* the world.

Heidegger comments that the essence of technology, Enframing, is ‘in a lofty sense ambiguous’.<sup>34</sup> As long as ‘place’, the world we are in, is

taken over and conquered as a 'setting for us', we are always already 'in the picture'. Yet the more we secure and control the world we are in as a setting for us, the more we are threatened by the danger of modern technology, by homelessness. In 'The thing', Heidegger describes this danger:

All distances in time and space are shrinking. . . .

Man puts the longest distances behind him in the shortest time. He puts the greatest distances behind himself and thus puts everything before himself at the shortest range.

Yet the frantic abolition of all distances brings no nearness; for nearness does not consist in shortness of distance. What is least remote from us in point of distance, by virtue of its picture on film or its sound on the radio, can remain far from us. What is incalculably far from us in point of distance can be near to us. Short distance is not itself nearness. Nor is great distance remoteness.<sup>35</sup>

With our conquest of distance, with our setting of everything before and for ourselves, we are threatened with the loss of nearness, and with it of the loss of remoteness. The distant has been brought spatially close, but it has not yet been brought humanly near. To use the words of Clifford Geertz, we are 'experience-distant'.<sup>36</sup> The danger, homelessness, that Heidegger finds threatening us in the modern age of technology is the loss of a human sense, a humane sense, of being in the world as a dwelling place. Just as photography makes it possible for a work of art to be everywhere and anywhere and to belong nowhere, so our modern technology makes it possible for us to be everywhere and anywhere and to belong nowhere. Like the work of art which has lost its aura, being in the world in the age of modern technology has lost its aura, the quality of its presence: 'the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be.' The displacement of the work of art warns us of our own impending homelessness. Can the work of art do more than warn? Can it grow into a saving power?

The setting of a work of art on view, on exhibition, shows how art can grow to be a saving power. I have argued that this 'setting' exemplifies Enframing and 'the conquest of the world as picture'. Thus the issue is not, as for Benjamin, whether what is on view is authentic or a reproduction. Nor is the issue whether the work is actually framed, as is Van Gogh's painting of the peasant shoes, or free-standing, as is the temple at Paestum. Finally the issue is not whether the work of art is or is not on its 'own site'. For the temple at Paestum is just as much displaced as the temple of Pergamon. And yet, according to Heidegger, it is out of this displacement, the homelessness of the exhibition setting,

that a work of art 'works', that is, originates being in the world as a *place for dwelling*.

Of Heidegger's many discussions of individual works of art I shall examine three: the work of sculpture treated in 'Art and space', the painting by Van Gogh of the peasant shoes, and the temple. In 'Art and space', Heidegger explicitly questions whether the physical-technical interpretation of space (as uniform extension within which every position is equal to any other) can remain valid as the 'only true space'.<sup>37</sup> On the basis of space so understood, both the 'space' of art works as well as the 'space' of our daily actions and interactions in the world are understood to be 'subjectively conditioned', that is, to be mere preformations (*Vorformen*) or at most transformations (*Abwandlungen*) of the one 'objective' cosmic space.<sup>38</sup> In 'Art and space', Heidegger's response to this question is that it is the 'space' of the work of art that alone enables us to understand the 'space' of our daily actions and interactions, and that it is more truly 'space' than the one 'objective' cosmic space. This same question is implicit in Heidegger's earlier discussion of the place of the work of art in 'The origin of the work of art'. There he maintains that: 'The work of art belongs, as work, uniquely within the realm [*Bereich*] that is opened up by itself.' This *realm* and the *place* (*Ort*) of the work of art in the age of technology is what I will call the world on earth as a 'dwelling place'.

In 'Art and space', Heidegger questions the 'space' of an anonymous work of sculpture. The work, he first remarks, is present in cosmic space. Its location in space can be fixed and its form of spatial figure can be geometrically described. Its form or figure determines a space within and space without. As a spatial configuration, the work of sculpture occupies a shape of space. These remarks, however accurate, fail to capture what is distinctive about the work of sculpture, namely, that it is a work of art and not a mere object. A work of sculpture, no mere object, is instead a product of a human artistic activity. To produce a work of sculpture, technical mastery is required. The work is thus a product of techniques and technologies. Does a work of sculpture 'occupy' space and a place in the same way a product of technology, for example, the hydroelectric plant set up on the Rhine, 'occupies' space and a place? We have seen that a product of technology occupies space by taking over and possession of (*Besitzergreifung*) a place, by conquering and mastering (*Beherrschung*) a place. A work of sculpture as a work of art, however, is more than a product of techniques and technology. As a work of art it does more than 'occupy' a place in space. According to Heidegger, it works as a *work of art* insofar as it 'embodies' (*Verkörperung*) a place.<sup>39</sup>

How does a *work* of sculpture 'work', that is, be present and take place as a work of art? Heidegger argues that the work of sculpture does

not work *in* space but *as* space. A work of sculpture works and takes place as a work not by 'occupying' space (*Raum*) and a place (*Ort*), but by making room or space (*räumen*, a verb) for a place (*Ort*).<sup>40</sup> A work of sculpture 'embodies' space and place not by taking over and possessing a place in space but by emancipating and releasing (*Freigabe*) a place for space; it 'works' not by conquering and mastering space and a place but instead by letting them be free (*Freigabe*). Thus the work of sculpture works not in or at a place, but takes place as a place. It is 'in' the work of sculpture that place 'takes place'. Heidegger characterizes works of sculpture as follows: '[T]he embodiment of places [*Orten*] which by opening and protecting a region [*Gegend*] hold gathered together around themselves a free space [*ein Freies*]. This free space preserves a dwelling [*Verweilen*], a place to stay for things, and a dwelling place [*Wohnen*] for human beings amidst things.'<sup>41</sup> In 'Art and space', Heidegger argues that a work of sculpture takes place in that it embodies a place. This embodied place makes possible and thus frees a free space which preserves a dwelling place for human beings amidst things.

The question of whether the physical-technical interpretation of space is to remain the privileged interpretation of space is explicit in the short essay, 'Art and space'. Heidegger shows how the work of sculpture as a work of art works, that is, makes room and makes space (*räumen*). In the work of sculpture, a place takes place which enriches (*bereichern*) space. The place embodied in the work of sculpture preserves and hence *saves* an enriched space (*Bereich*) for human dwelling amidst things in their nearness and remoteness. Given the danger of technology, the loss of the quality of the presence, the aura of being in the world, the place embodied in the work of sculpture grows into a saving power in the age of technology.

But is this saving power not specific to works of sculpture and to the way place and an enrichment of the world space that we dwell in takes place in such works? Or can other kinds of works of art also grow into a saving power? In 'The origin of the work of art', Heidegger does not deal directly with the question of the space of the work of art and cosmic space. Nor does he focus on the question of the place of the work of art in the age of technology as we have done in light of Benjamin's perceptive observations. Nonetheless by returning to the painting and the temple discussed in this early work, we find that in both cases the place of the work of art embodies and opens up a dwelling place that transcends the exhibition setting.

Van Gogh's painting, a pictorial representation, is presumed to be on exhibition. The shoes painted by Van Gogh are not shoes in use. They are represented as only standing there before us to be viewed. The shoes standing there before us to be viewed are 'in' the painting which is itself standing there before us to be viewed 'in' some sort of exhibition setting.

Let us note first what the place of the shoes, the space occupied by the shoes represented in this painting, tells us about the place of that which is set up on exhibition. Heidegger remarks that 'From Van Gogh's painting we cannot even tell where these shoes stand. There is nothing surrounding the pair of shoes in or to which they might belong – only an undefined space.'<sup>42</sup> Standing there before us in the painting, the peasant shoes occupy an undefined space. They stand no place. Belonging nowhere, they are displaced and homeless. The undefined space represented 'in the painting' tells us of the displacement and homelessness which is the place of whatever is 'in' an exhibition setting. This 'pictorial representation', the painting by Van Gogh, does not appear at first to embody a place or to open up a dwelling place. Rather it seems instead to present the displacement and homelessness not only of a piece of equipment but also of a work of art in the age of technology.

But is the only place 'in' the painting the space which the pair of shoes occupy? Is there not also place 'in' the painting embodied 'in' the shoes themselves, a place which is more than the spatial form or figure of the shoes pictorially represented by Van Gogh? What does the place embodied 'in' the peasant shoes tell us first about the place of a piece of equipment, and second, about the place of a work of art in the age of technology? Heidegger describes the place 'in' the painting embodied 'in' the peasant shoes as follows:

From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes – the toilsome tread of the worker stands forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by a raw wind. On the leather lie the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles vibrates the silent call of the earth, the quiet gift of the ripening grain and its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field. This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining anxiety as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want, the trembling before the impending child-bed and shivering at the surrounding menace of death.<sup>43</sup>

The place 'in' the painting embodied 'in' the peasant shoes discloses *the place which belongs to the shoes*. Equipment, here the pair of peasant shoes, is that which is reliable. Its place is a dwelling place, the world on earth. This place, a dwelling place between birth and death, is a place filled with anxiety and joy. Van Gogh's painting 'works' as a work of art in that it embodies a dwelling place. Its own place, the place which it embodies, is the world on earth as a dwelling place. It does not represent but rather opens up this place, our own dwelling place, as a

place not to be conquered and occupied by us but instead as a place for us to dwell.

Let us look at Heidegger's discussion of a third work of art, a temple, presumed to be on site. Unlike the painting, the temple does not pictorially represent anything: 'It simply stands there in the middle of a rock-cleft valley.'<sup>44</sup> Does it too embody a place which opens up a dwelling place or does it stand there in its setting to be viewed like the painting at the exhibition? The temple which stands there is located at a particular, although we note unspecified, location in space. It is more than simply a configuration of space, a shape of space filled with matter. As a building, it structures the space within and the space without. As a temple building, moreover, the space within and the space without were once determined by the presence of the god. Heidegger notes that as a temple:

The building encloses the figure of the god, and in this concealment lets it stand out into the holy precinct [*Bezirk*] through the open portico. By means of the temple, the god is present in the temple. This presence of the god is itself the extension and delimitation of the precinct as a holy precinct. The temple and its precinct, however, do not fade away into the indefinite.<sup>45</sup>

The temple that 'simply stands there' was once, as the site of a cult, 'in' a holy precinct. Its 'where', the holy precinct, determined the 'how' of its being, its being a *temple* building. But for us the space within and the space without, while structured by the temple, are no longer defined as a holy precinct (*Bezirk*). Insofar as the world which included the god of this cult has withdrawn and decayed, the cult site has become no different from an exhibition setting. The temple is present for us now only as a work of art. Yet as a work of art it does not appear at first to embody a place which opens up a dwelling place. Rather it appears instead simply to stand there on view 'in the middle of a rock-cleft valley'.

Does the temple simply stand there 'in' its setting to be viewed? Is the only place there its place 'in' this setting? As a work of art, is there not also a place embodied 'in' the temple? Heidegger first describes the place embodied 'in' this temple:

[T]he temple-work . . . first fits together and at the same time gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape of destiny for human being. The all-governing expanse of this open relational context is the world of this historical people.<sup>46</sup>

The place embodied 'in' the temple is *the world of an historical people*, the world which ranges between birth and death. Between birth and death, life takes place within the extremes of disaster and blessing, of victory and disgrace, and of endurance and decline. The work of art, the temple, embodies this place, its own place, as a place that takes place on earth. Heidegger next describes how the place embodied 'in' the temple lets the *earth* take place:

Standing there, the building rests on the rocky ground. This resting of the work draws out of the rock the mystery of that rock's clumsy yet spontaneous support. Standing there, the building holds its ground against the storm raging above it and so first makes the storm itself manifest in its violence. The luster and the gleam of the stone, though itself apparently glowing only by the grace of the sun, yet first brings to light the light of the day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of the night. The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of air. The steadfastness of the work contrasts with the surge of the surf, and its own repose brings out the raging of the sea.<sup>47</sup>

The temple as a work of art 'works' in that it embodies a dwelling place. Its own place, which it embodies, is the world on earth as a dwelling place. Like the work of sculpture, and the painting, it does not represent but rather opens up this place, our own dwelling place.

In 'Art and space', Heidegger comments that we must learn to think the place that is in things rather than to continue to think that things, including works of art, are in a place, a position in space.<sup>48</sup> In his discussion of three works of art, he shows how the place of the work of art opens up the world on earth as a different place, a dwelling place. As the 'ever-nonobjective' and thus not the world as picture, this world discloses the limits of the world as picture. This world 'worlds'; it is not 'a merely imagined framework' (*ein nur eingebildeter . . . vorgestellter Rahmen*) but 'more fully in being than the tangible and perceptible realm in which we believe ourselves to be at home'.<sup>49</sup> The homelessness of where 'we believe ourselves to be at home' emerges as the world opened up by the work of art transforms the ordinary, the earth, into the extraordinary: 'The rock comes to bear and rest, so first becomes rock; metals come to glitter and shimmer, colors to glow, tones to sing, the word to speak'.<sup>50</sup> The place embodied in the work of art in the age of modern technology does not *represent* the world endangered by technology and threatened by the loss of its aura. Rather it *brings forth* or *originates* the world in which we dwell on this earth. The place in the work of art embodies and opens up *the world on earth as a place* not to be conquered as picture and by technology but rather as *a place for*



*dwelling*. Art grows into a saving power by embodying places which preserve and hence save a place for dwelling.

Heidegger is saying more than that the world disclosed in the work of art, for example, in Van Gogh's painting the world of the peasant woman, ultimately eludes representation so that the meaning of a work of art is inexhaustible. Rather, he is saying that the work of art discloses *the world which we are in*, and that the meaning and truth of being in the world on earth as a dwelling place cannot be conquered through a thinking that is only representation. Finally he is saying that 'the uniqueness of the fact that it' – the world in which we dwell on this earth – 'is rather than is not' calls for and calls forth a thinking which, like the work of art, is poetic.

In exploring the meaning of Heidegger's claim that 'the more questioningly we ponder the essence of technology, the more mysterious (home-like) the essence of art becomes', I began by showing that works of art are not *exempt* from the homelessness that is for Heidegger the danger of technology. Benjamin and Heidegger, I have argued, are in agreement that the 'place' of the work of art in the age of technology is no longer the 'cult site' which has become utopian but instead the 'exhibition setting' which is ubiquitous. Heidegger, however, would differ from Benjamin in his account of the displacement of the work of art in the age of technology. For Heidegger, this displacement is not due to the 'revolutionary event' of photography but instead a special case of the displacement that occurs to all that is with the advent of the modern scientific revolution. Heidegger, however, also claims that art grows out of the danger of technology as a saving power. In exploring this claim, I have shown that a work of art in its displacement discloses *in an exemplary way* the essence of technology and its danger. Finally, I have shown how for Heidegger a work of art serves as an *exemplar* for the overcoming of homelessness, by disclosing the world *viewed* to be more, to be a *dwelling place*. What I have not explored in this paper, however, is Heidegger's further claim, the claim that, for example, Hölderlin's poem, 'The Rhine', embodies a place, the Rhine. Although beyond the scope of this paper, it remains to be shown how the embodiment of place also occurs in literary works of art.

Benjamin comments that the discussion of whether photography is an art ignores 'the primary question – whether the very invention of photography had not transformed the entire nature of art'.<sup>51</sup> To this, I have argued, Heidegger would respond that there is an even more primary question – whether the discovery of the essence of technology does not make manifest in a new way the essence of art.

## Notes

1 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, trans. Michael Hamburger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 463.

2 Martin Heidegger, 'The question concerning technology', in *The Question Concerning Technology*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 35. Heidegger does not mean by essence (*Wesen*) what something is, but how it comes to presence (*wesen*, a verb).

3 Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, Vol. 4 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1897), IV, 2351–7, especially 2353 (3a). See also Sigmund Freud, 'The uncanny', in *Collected Papers*, trans. Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth Press, 1934), IV, 368–407.

4 Martin Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*, in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 219. See also Michel Haar 'La demeure et l'exil: Hölderlin et Saint-John Perse', in *Les symboles du lieu, l'habitation de l'homme* (Paris: l'Herne, 1983), pp. 24–43.

5 Martin Heidegger, *Die Kunst und der Raum* (St. Gallen: Erker-Verlag, 1969), translated by Charles H. Siebert in *Man and World* VI (1973), 3–8.

6 *Poems and Fragments*, p. 601.

7 Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 217. This quotation is from: Paul Valéry, *Aesthetics*, trans. Ralph Manheim, Vol. 13 (New York: Bollingen, 1964), p. 225.

8 *Aesthetics*, p. 222.

9 *Illuminations*, p. 224.

10 See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Sheed and Ward Ltd. (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), p. 133 for his discussion of the sacred quality of the work of art.

11 *Illuminations*, pp. 220–2. In Benjamin's discussion, the authenticity of a work cannot be destroyed by technical reproduction and continues even though the aura of the work decays. By emphasizing the *reproduction* of the authentic work, Benjamin concentrates on the copy relation not on the correlation between the decay of the aura and the increase in ubiquity. Thus he overlooks the importance of 'place'.

12 *Illuminations*, p. 221.

13 See Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 183–97 for the dispute between Benjamin and Adorno on the issues raised by Benjamin's essay.

14 *Illuminations*, p. 224.

15 *Illuminations*, p. 223.

16 Martin Heidegger, 'The origin of the work of art', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 66. The distinction in question here is not the same as the distinction between a real work of art and kitsch. This essay is not a 'critique of judgment' and thus does not address the question of how we know what counts as a work of art. Instead Heidegger presupposes that 'works of art are familiar to everyone' (p. 18). Moreover to insure this starting point, he states that 'great art . . . and only such is under consideration' (p. 40). In thinking about art as the origin of the work of art, he acknowledges that hermeneutical circularity is inevitable: 'Not only is the main step from work to art a circle like the step from art to work, but every step that we attempt circles in this circle' (p. 18). Heidegger's main concern is how we can enter into this circle and can 'preserve' the great works of art with which we are familiar and their truth. Thus his essay begins and ends with a

question which is directed to us: 'is art still an essential and necessary way in which that truth happens which is decisive for our historical existence, or is art no longer of this character?' (p. 80).

17 'Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten', *Der Spiegel*, 31 May 1976, pp. 193–219.

18 *Poems and Fragments*, p. 463. This experience, of the divine as near but far, is akin to what Benjamin means by 'aura'.

19 Martin Heidegger, 'The age of the world picture', in *The Question Concerning Technology*, p. 116.

20 *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 41.

21 Martin Heidegger, *What is a Thing?* trans. W. B. Barton, Jr. and Vera Deutsch (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1967), p. 84.

22 Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1957), p. viii.

23 See also René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, trans. E. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), I, 261. Here Descartes distinguishes place and space. Place, he says, indicates situation; space, figure or magnitude.

24 Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 67. Emphasis added.

25 *The Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 87. Emphasis added.

26 *The Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 87.

27 See Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1979) for his discussion of the modern concept of representation. In my presentation of Heidegger's account of representation, I have not treated the association of representation with picture (*Bild*) as a matter merely of metaphor. Thus I am arguing that Heidegger would not agree with Rorty's solution: 'We must get the visual, in particular the mirroring, *metaphors* out of our speech altogether' (p. 371, emphasis added). Rather I am suggesting that the issue for Heidegger is one of another way of seeing, a new or renewed sensibility.

28 *The Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 71.

29 *The Question Concerning Technology*, p. 134. For other accounts of this issue, see Jacques Derrida, 'Sendings; on representation', trans. Peter and Mary Ann Caws, *Social Research*, ILIX (1982), 295–326. See also Véronique Fóti's perceptive reading of Heidegger and criticism of Derrida in 'Representation and the image: between Heidegger, Derrida and Plato', forthcoming in *Man and World*.

30 *The Question Concerning Technology*, p. 4.

31 *The Question Concerning Technology*, p. 30.

32 *The Question Concerning Technology*, p. 149.

33 *The Question Concerning Technology*, p. 16.

34 *The Question Concerning Technology*, p. 33.

35 *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 165.

36 Clifford Geertz, 'From the native's point of view: on the nature of anthropological understanding', in *Interpretative Social Science* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1979), p. 226f.

37 *Die Kunst und der Raum*, p. 6.

38 *Die Kunst und der Raum*, p. 7.

39 *Die Kunst und der Raum*, p. 5f.

40 *Die Kunst und der Raum*, p. 9.

41 *Die Kunst und der Raum*, p. 11.

42 *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 33.

43 *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 34.

44 *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 41.

45 *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 41f. See also Robert Denoon Cumming's 'The odd couple: Heidegger and Derrida', *Review of Metaphysics* 34 (March 1981), 487–521 for a discussion of other accounts of Heidegger's discussion of Van Gogh's painting, in particular, of Derrida's treatment of the lace of the shoes.

46 *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 42.

47 *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 42.

48 *Die Kunst und der Raum*, p. 11.

49 *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 44.

50 *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 46.

51 *Illuminations*, p. 227.

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## Heidegger's poetics: the question of mimesis

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John Sallis

Poetics.

The title translates – or, rather, reinscribes – the title of the text by Aristotle: *Περὶ Ποιητικῆς*.

Poetics would be, then, a discourse concerning poetry. Or, rather, in the case of Aristotle it would concern a series of forms which, though gathered under *ποιητική*, correspond only quite roughly to what one would today call poetry. Indeed, Aristotle's list cannot but seem somewhat heterogeneous: epic poetry, tragedy, comedy, dithyrambic poetry, most flute-playing and harp-playing (1447 a 13–16). A rather odd assortment from the standpoint of modern aesthetics: a bit of poetry, a bit of drama, a bit of music. Also, perhaps, a warning against too easily assimilating poetics (first of all, Aristotle's) to aesthetics, a mark of their heterogeneity.

Heidegger will radicalize a connection already evident in Aristotle's enumeration: the connection with language, quite direct except in the musical forms. Not only poetics but also poetry is a form of discourse, so that poetics would be a discourse on discourse, language folded back upon itself, added to itself. To the extent that poetry is essentially narrative, bound to a story, a plot (*μῦθος*) – the most essential element in the constitution of tragedy, according to Aristotle (1450 a 38–9) – poetics would be a *λόγος* concerning *μῦθος*, a mythology. It would be a theoretical discourse (*θεωρία*) concerning poetical discourse, a theory of poetry.

Heidegger will radicalize also the question of such addition of discourse to discourse. He will ask: What occurs in the space between these two discourses? What is the relation of thinking to poetry? He will radicalize these questions beyond the closure of aesthetics, at a limit where the very determination of thinking as theory and, hence, of poetics as theory of poetry can no longer remain simply intact. Poetics will no longer be

bound to recover a sighting in advance, proceeding thus to an essence of poetry that would be had in common by all poetry, essence as τὸ κοινόν; rather, it will attend to such essence as is poetized when, as with Hölderlin, the poet poetizes the essence of poetry. Effacing itself before the poem, poetics would listen and respond to what speaks in the poem, to the speaking of language in which it is said what poetry is.

For Aristotle, too, it is a matter of saying what poetry is. Poetics is a discourse concerning poetry itself (the first words of Aristotle's text: περὶ ποιητικῆς αὐτῆς); poetics is to say what poetry itself is, before then going on to speak of its various forms (τε καὶ τῶν εἰδῶν αὐτῆς). Indeed, this is how Aristotle's text begins, according to nature (κατὰ φύσιν), taking first things first, saying, first of all, what poetry itself is, saying what not only is common to all those forms enumerated but also constitutes them as poetry, determining them and in that sense preceding them, the *a priori* of poetry.

Aristotle's text says it in one word: μύμησις.

This word, too, comes to be reinscribed, the name carried on. As such, it names that determination that has come to govern the theory of poetry and of art in general ever since Aristotle. Not that opposition cannot be found. Not that this determination is just emptily and dogmatically repeated in the history of the theory of art. And yet, even where the mimetic determination of art is most vigorously opposed, it is almost invariably a matter of rejecting a false mimesis for the sake of recovering genuine mimesis in its art-determining form. This gesture assumes one of its most subtle and complex – though still unmistakable – forms in the *Critique of Judgment*. For example, in rethinking art as the product of genius, Kant writes: 'Everyone is agreed that genius is to be wholly opposed to the *spirit of imitation* [*Nachahmungsgeiste*].'<sup>1</sup> And yet, in the same context he also writes: 'Nature is beautiful if it also looks like art; and art can only be called beautiful if we are conscious of it as art while yet it looks like nature [*als Natur aussieht*].'<sup>2</sup>

The relation between Heidegger's poetics and the determination of art as mimesis will prove to be at least equally complex. Heidegger's opposition is explicit, for instance in 'The origin of the work of art'<sup>3</sup> where he speaks of the 'opinion, which has fortunately been overcome, that art is an imitation and depiction of reality [*eine Nachahmung und Abschilderung des Wirklichen*]' (GA 5: 22). His opposition to mimesis is equally explicit in deed: at a strategic point in this same text he takes a Greek temple as his example of a work of art – chooses it, as he says, intentionally (*mit Absicht*) – precisely because it is not mimetic, or at least not representational (*nicht zur darstellenden Kunst gerechnet wird*) (GA 5: 27). The question will be whether there is also in play in Heidegger's poetics a more originary sense of mimesis. Is Heidegger's opposition to mimesis in its traditional forms also matched by a recovery of a more

originary mimesis? Or rather, since Heidegger does not thematize any such recovery, can his opposition to mimesis be shown to have as its other side an unmarked recovery of mimesis? Can Heidegger's poetics carry on the name *mimesis*? Can one hear an echo of mimesis rebounding from that limit that marks the end of metaphysics and of aesthetics.

A trace of the gesture that I have just sketched can be discerned in the circling with which 'The origin of the work of art' begins. The first of the circles joins artist and work of art: on the one side, the work of art is ordinarily taken to arise through the activity of the artist, so that the artist would be the origin of the work; yet, on the other side, the artist is what he is only by virtue of the work, so that the work would be equally the origin of the artist as artist. Hence: 'The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist' (GA 5: 1).

Heidegger's first intervention is to open this circle: 'Nevertheless, neither is the sole support of the other.' Specifically, then, the work of art is not such as to be completely, essentially determined by its relation to the activity of the artist, not even if, in turn, determining the artist as artist. In a work of art there is essentially something more than its being produced by a certain kind of activity, something more than its correlation with the productive artist, an excess that opens the circle.

One way of determining this excess would be to refer to the mimetic character of the work of art, taking this character as an opening toward an other, which by imitation of the other would serve to disclose that other. Hence, the very beginning of 'The origin of the work of art' may be regarded as opening what could be (and traditionally would be) determined as a space of mimesis, an opening by virtue of which the work of art, mimetically disclosing an other, would essentially exceed the circle of production.

And yet, Heidegger does not move to such a determination, resisting it even at the risk of moving instead within mere tautology, merely compounding the system of circles. For what he calls the excess, both on the side of the work of art and on that of the artist, is simply *art*:

In themselves and in their correlation [*Wechselbezug*] artist and work *are* by virtue of a third thing, which is the first, namely, that which gives artist and work of art their names – art.

(GA 5: 1)

The question is whether there remains a trace of mimesis in this opening. Can mimesis be recovered within the tautological origination of the work of art?

Heidegger's initial move is to enter the system of circles: He begins with the work of art and proposes to move toward the discovery of what art, the excessive origin, is. 'The origin of the work of art' will continue

throughout to circle within this circle joining art and work of art; even when, in the final section of the text, the turn is made from the work of art to the artist, it turns out to lead almost immediately back to the work of art, back into the circling between work of art and art. And it is a matter not just of moving within this great circle but of circling within it: 'Not only is the main step from work to art, as the step from art to work, a circle, but every particular step that we attempt circles in this circle' (GA 5: 3).

There can be no question here of reconstituting this circling in all its compoundings and intricacies. Instead, I shall attempt to move as economically as possible to that complex of turns within which I shall propose a certain reinscription of mimesis, a reinscription that will follow the lines of a trace of mimesis discernible in those turns in Heidegger's text.

Beginning with the work of art, moving through the traditional concepts by which the work's thingly substratum would be interpreted and yet also obstructed, turning then to a description, without theory, of a pair of peasant shoes, or rather, to the shoes as depicted in Van Gogh's painting, Heidegger shows that the painting serves to disclose what the shoes are in truth. Thus, the work of art is shown to involve a happening of truth. Art is, then, to be determined as: truth's putting itself (in)to (the) work (*das Sich-ins-Werk-Setzen der Wahrheit*) – that is, to bring out the double sense: truth's putting itself to work in putting itself into the work of art.

Heidegger poses immediately the possibility of recovering mimesis in this determination of art as the happening of truth; yet he poses it ironically, characterizing the mimetic theory of art as 'that opinion, which has fortunately been overcome'. If art is a matter of truth and if truth means, as it has since Aristotle, correspondence with reality, then one might suppose art to be an imitation or depiction of reality. But does Van Gogh's painting simply depict some particular actual pair of shoes, doubling in the artistic imitation something actually existing? Heidegger is emphatic: 'By no means.'

And yet, as Aristotle recognized in differentiating between the poet and the historian (1451 a 36–1452 b 7), artistic mimesis need not pertain to particular, actually existing things. Thus, Heidegger continues, his irony slightly more veiled: 'In the work, therefore, it is not a matter of the reproduction [*Wiedergabe*] of some actually present particular being, but, on the contrary, a matter of the reproduction of the universal essence of the thing' (GA 5: 22). Art would be put forth as mimesis of essence or of universal truth, were not essence, universality, and truth so utterly in question. Heidegger invokes this questionableness: 'But then where and how is this universal essence, so that works of art are able to correspond to it? To what essence of what thing should a Greek



temple correspond?' (GA 5: 22). Here, then, it is a matter of opposing the determination of art as happening of truth to the mimetic determination, displacing the latter for the sake of the former. And yet, is it a matter of simple opposition, of simple displacement? Or do the opposition and the displacement perhaps inevitably retain a trace of that which would be opposed and displaced, a trace that would hold open the possibility of a recovery of mimesis. If truth happens in art and if it is – to borrow the phrase from von Herrmann<sup>4</sup> – a matter of an ontological happening, in distinction from all interaction among beings, a matter of a happening in which, in Heidegger's words, 'the Being of beings comes into the steadiness of its shining [*das Sein des Seienden kommt in das Ständige seines Scheinens*]' (GA 5: 21), then can art simply no longer be determined as mimetic? Or is it possible to think mimesis ontologically? Can art be determined as mimesis of the happening of Being? Can art even always have been, beneath the interpretations given it by aesthetics, determinable as mimesis of the clearing in which Being can shine forth, as mimesis of truth as ἀλήθεια?

Indeed, truth and its happening are rethought in 'The origin of the work of art' as, ἀλήθεια, as that happening of clearing and concealing that first makes it possible for beings to come to presence; this text thus appropriates all the resources that are released by the crossing of the essence of truth and the truth of essence that is most rigorously developed in 'On the essence of truth.' Art is, then, one of the ways in which truth – as the strife of clearing and concealing – can happen. It is a way in which truth puts itself to work, becomes effective, comes into play. In art truth happens as the strife of world and earth. This is, then, precisely what Heidegger sets out to think: the artwork (its *Insichstehen*) in its relation to world, to earth, and to the strife of world and earth.

Let me attempt to sketch as economically as possible the main lines of this complex.

World, neither a totality of things nor a framework cast over them, is not anything that could come to presence in such a way that one might intuit it. It is, rather, that which first lets things be, lets them come to presence: 'By the opening up of a world, all things gain their lingering and hastening, their remoteness and nearness, their scope and limits' (GA 5: 31). World is, in Heidegger's phrase, *die waltende Weite der offenen Bezüge* (GA 5: 28): the governing expanse of the open relational complex, the expanse of the connections that hold sway for a historical people. As such, world so exceeds all beings that Heidegger will say, not that it *is*, but rather that *world worlds* (*Welt weltet*), thus again venturing tautology in the domain of the excessive and originary.

Earth, on the other hand, is thought in relation φύσις; it is thought as that which harbors such things as come forth in that emergence (*Aufgehen*) that the Greeks experienced as φύσις. Earth is that which

harbors such things in such a way as to secure and conceal them. As such, earth shatters every attempt to penetrate it, withdraws from all efforts to disclose it. It is essentially undisclosable, self-secluding, closed off.

In the relation of the work of art both to world and to earth there is operative a certain reciprocity. The Greek temple belongs to a world, is set within it; while, on the other hand, it also opens up a world, lets the expanse of its connections hold sway. Heidegger thinks this reciprocal relation more precisely as *Aufstellen* (setting up). The work of art is *set up* within a world; it is set up, not in the sense of 'a bare placing', but rather 'in the sense of erecting a building, raising a statue, presenting a tragedy at a holy festival' (GA 5: 29–30). And yet, thus set up within a world, the work of art itself sets up that world, opens and sustains it: 'Towering up within itself, the work opens up a *world* and keeps it abidingly in force' (GA 5: 30). The Greek temple does not just occupy a space but, belonging to the Greek world, opens and sustains that world: 'It is the temple-work that first fits together [*fügt*] and at the same time gathers [*sammelt*] around itself the unity of those paths and connections in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape of destiny [*die Gestalt seines Geschickes*] for human beings' (GA 5: 27–8).

The similarly reciprocal relation between the work of art and earth Heidegger thinks as *Herstellen* (producing, setting forth). The work of art is, as we say, *made out* of some earthy material such as stone, wood, or color; it is thus set forth, produced, from earth. But in the work of art the material is not assimilated to a function or use, as with equipment, but rather is allowed to show itself as material: 'By contrast, the temple-work, in setting up a world, does not cause the material to disappear, but rather causes it to come forth for the very first time and to come into the open of the work's world' (GA 5: 32). Thus, in being set forth from earth, the work of art is set back into earth in such a way as to set forth earth, that is, in such a way as to bring the earth into the open, the clearing, while still preserving its character as self-secluding, undisclosable. By its way of being made out of an earthy material, of being *set forth* from earth, the work of art, in turn, *sets forth* earth, brings it into the open precisely as undisclosable.

The work of art can, then, be described as involving two essential features or connections (*Wesensbezüge*): the setting up of world and the setting forth of earth, each taken in its essentially reciprocal character. These connections belong together in the work of art, and it is precisely their unity that constitutes the *Insichstehen* of the work. But how do world and earth belong together such that the setting up of world and the setting forth of earth can belong together in the unity of the work?

Heidegger's answer is decisive: world and earth belong together *in opposition*.

The world, in resting upon the earth, strives to surmount it. As self-opening it cannot endure anything closed. The earth, however, as sheltering [*als die Bergende*] tends always to draw the world into itself and keep it there. The opposition of world and earth is a strife [*Streit*]. (GA 5: 35)

The opposition is a strife (πόλεμος), not in the sense of mere discord and disorder, but rather in the sense of what Heidegger calls essential strife, that is, a strife in which each draws the other forth into the very fulfillment of that other's essence. Thus world can be as world only in its opposition, its strife, with earth, and vice versa. The work of art, setting up a world and setting forth earth, instigates such strife, lets happen such a happening of truth.

The work of art thus lets truth put itself to work. And yet, as *das Sich-ins-Werk-Setzen der Wahrheit*, art involves also another moment: truth puts itself to work in putting itself *into* the work of art. The happening of truth that is instigated by art takes place *in* the work of art. The question thus comes into focus: How is it that truth can (and, in art, must) happen in something like a work, in a being that is brought forth, created, by an artist? In Heidegger's more precise formulation: 'To what extent does truth, on the basis of its essence [*aus dem Grunde ihres Wesens*] have an impulse to the work [*Zug zum Werk*]' (GA 5: 48). It is a question, then, of the *Zug zum Werk*: a question of how truth is drawn toward the work; a question of how it is so aligned as to be inclined toward the work in which it will put itself to work; a question of how truth is trained on the work (as one trains one's gaze on something) and indeed even pulled toward putting itself into the work.

In a sense this is the pivotal question of Heidegger's poetics. Its development will gather up all the resources that 'The origin of the work of art' has prepared and will open upon Heidegger's thinking of poetry, also upon that trace of mimesis that I have proposed to mark. And yet, in the development of this question, it will not be a matter simply of arriving at an answer with which everything will then be settled. For the question is essentially unsettling, in Heidegger's term *ein Rätsel*. In approaching it nothing could be more appropriate than to incant the opening words of the Afterword to 'The origin of the work of art':

The foregoing reflections are concerned with the riddle [*Rätsel*] of art, the riddle that art itself is. They are far from claiming to solve the riddle. The task is to see the riddle.

(GA 5: 67)

To see it, first, in the establishing of truth in the open. It is a question of the site of truth, of the open space in which the strife of clearing and concealing can take place:

The openness of this open, that is, truth, can be what it is, namely, *this* openness, only if and as long as it establishes [*einrichtet*] itself in its open. Hence, there must always be in this open a being in which the openness takes its stand and attains its constancy [*ihren Stand und ihre Ständigkeit nimmt*]. In occupying the open, the openness holds open the open and sustains it.

(GA 5: 48)

Truth requires the open; it must be established *in the open* in order to be the openness it is. But to be established in the open is to take a stand *in a being*, in which, then, truth sustains the open. This need for coming to stand in the open is, in the case of art, the *Zug zum Werk*. Yet, how does this *Zug* arise from the essence of truth? One may say, as Heidegger does, that openness can be what it is only by establishing itself in the open, that there is need for truth to have a site, an open space, a *Da*. But this is only to reiterate the riddle: that the essence of truth prescribes, in the case of art, the *Zug zum Werk*, the establishing of truth in a being. To attempt to see further into the riddle at this level would require showing how the connection with a being is essential to the essence of truth – that is, how there belongs to the essence of truth another counter-essence (*Gegenwesen*) like the turn into errancy,<sup>5</sup> but one which in closing the difference would – in a way that errancy does not – serve to reopen and sustain it. Such a turn to beings would be such as to reopen the difference within a being, even though it could not but always risk falling into complicity with errancy – which is to say that art and truth would always have to be thought in connection with art and error.

Heidegger does not extend the question in this direction. In any case, it remains questionable whether such an extension would really extend toward anything that could be characterized as an answer or whether it would not again come face to face with the riddle that art is, compounding the latter with the riddle of a truth to which manifold untruth essentially belongs. Remaining still within tautology.

But there is another step that Heidegger does venture toward the riddle. It is a kind of step back, a step that retracts an order that the initial step would seem to have posited. What has to be taken back is the apparent priority that truth would have with respect to the establishing of that truth at a site, in a being. In other words, it is not as though there were first a truth in itself which then only subsequently would come to

be established in a being. Rather, truth and its establishment in a being *belong together*:

But truth is not in itself present beforehand, somewhere among the stars, only later to descend elsewhere among beings. . . . Clearing of openness and establishment in the open belong together. They are the same one essence of the happening of truth.

(GA 5: 49)

It is not a matter of truth's going over into a being that it stands over against in advance; rather, truth is nothing apart from its coming to be established in a being. It is not as though there is, first, difference, which then comes to be mediated; rather, difference first occurs precisely at the site of the happening of truth.

The work of art is such a site, a being that is brought forth so as to establish truth, so as to bring about truth as the strife of world and earth. Such bringing-forth (*Hervorbringen*) is a form of ποιήσις. Heidegger identifies it as that creating that is properly artistic, though he insists, on the other hand, that it not be construed merely as an activity of a subject. For here too it remains a matter of excess, of art's exceeding the circle of production so decisively that all creating must remain also receptive.

It is, then, in the work of art that the riddle – the riddle that art is – is to be seen. The work of art is the being in which truth, occurring as the strife of world and earth, is to have its site. This strife is not to be resolved in the work of art nor even just housed there. Rather, it is precisely there that the strife is to be opened, instigated. But the work of art can itself release the strife only if it embodies it: 'This being must therefore have in itself the essential features [or lines – *Wesenszüge*] of the strife' (GA 5: 50).

What, then, is the strife? What are its *Wesenszüge*? Heidegger says that the strife is a *Riss* and stresses by this word that the strife is not a matter simply of opposition but rather is such that the opponents belong to one another in their very opposition. He draws this out especially in the words *Grundriss*, *Umriss*, *Aufriss*, drawing, as it were, the essential lines of the strife. The opponents belong together by having a certain common ground or origin – that is, strife as *Riss* is *Grundriss*. Also, they belong together by virtue of a certain operation of measure or limit by which they are brought into an outline – that is, strife as *Riss* is *Umriss*. But as opposed they open the space of the emergence (*Aufgehen*, φύσις) of things – that is, strife as *Riss* is *Aufriss*.<sup>6</sup>

These essential lines of the strife must be embodied in the created being brought forth as work of art. More precisely, the strife (as *Riss* – one could say: rift) must be *set into* that being; it must be established,

set firmly (*festgestellt*) into the being that is thus to be a work of art. The question is: How does this setting (*Stellen*) occur? How does it come about? Heidegger's answer gathers up virtually all the resources that have been prepared by 'The origin of the work of art': truth can establish itself in such a being only if 'the strife opens up in this being, i.e., this being is itself brought into the rift [*Riss*]' (*GA* 5: 51). What appears here to be merely an equation is not such at all but, instead, is the hinge on which the entire matter turns: the strife (rift) is set into the being (work of art)/the being is itself brought (set) into the rift (strife). It is not that these two moments are identical; nor is one the ground of the other. Rather, it is a matter of gathering up those reciprocal connections that, earlier in the text, have been thought as *Aufstellen* (being set up in a world/setting up a world) and as *Herstellen* (being set forth out of earth/setting forth earth). Now it is a matter of thinking these together, of thinking the reciprocity that joins the work of art and the strife of world and earth: the strife set into the work of art/the work of art set into the strife. It is not a matter of explaining these settings (*Stellen*), nor of explaining one setting by means of another. The point is not to secure the settings but rather to discern and preserve their reciprocity, thus to see a bit further into the riddle that art is.

The issue of such reciprocal *Stellen* Heidegger names *Gestalt*. It is imperative not to surrender the word to its ordinary senses (for instance, by translating it immediately and without reserve as *shape* or *figure*) but rather to understand it, first of all, from its connection to *Stellen*, to understand it as what issues from that reciprocal *Stellen* by which strife is set into a being and that being, in turn, is set into strife. Such *Stellen* is, says Heidegger, a *Feststellen*. In the *Addendum* to 'The origin of the work of art', he proposes to interpret *Stellen* as θέσις, as bringing-forth,<sup>7</sup> hence, as a form of ποιήσις. He proposes also to interpret the *Fest-* of *Feststellen* as: outlined, admitted into the limit, into the boundary in the sense of πέρας. Interpreted in this sense, limit is not such as simply to exclude and block out but rather gathers in such a way as to let something be brought forth, to let it shine forth; for example, 'by its contour [*Umriss*] in the Greek light the mountain stands in its towering and repose' (*GA* 5: 71).

It is, then, as *Gestalt* that the rift occurs within a being (the work of art) that is also, in turn, set into the rift. Hence: 'The createdness of the work means: truth's being set in outline [*Festgestelltsein*] in the figure [*Gestalt*]' (*GA* 5: 51). The *Gestalt* that issues from the reciprocal *Stellen* as *Feststellen*, this figure of truth, is also the place of the shining of truth – that is, of the beautiful:

Beauty does not occur alongside and apart from this truth. When truth sets itself into the work, it appears [*erscheint*]. The appearing

[*Erscheinen*] – as this Being of truth in the work and as work – is beauty. Thus the beautiful belongs to the self-eventuation [*Sichereignis*] of truth.

(GA 5: 69)

Rethought in its Platonic determination, the beautiful is τὸ ἐκφανέσ-  
τατον.

Truth happens, shining forth as the beautiful, when a being is brought forth in such a way that truth (as strife, as rift) is set into that being and that being is set into truth. Such setting issues in the *Gestalt*. Through such bringing-forth, truth is set in outline, set within its limit (πέρας), in the *Gestalt*. It is not, however, as though a being were first brought forth, only then to be made object of the reciprocal setting, becoming the setting for truth and being itself set into truth. Rather, the bringing-forth and the setting are one and the same: in being brought forth, the work is set into truth and becomes the setting for truth; and, conversely, in undergoing the reciprocal setting and thus issuing in the *Gestalt*, the work is brought forth. Bringing-forth (*Hervorbringen*) is – that is, is Heidegger's translation of – ποιήσις. That ποιήσις that is the same as the θέσις of truth Heidegger calls *Dichtung*. It may also be called – reinscribing Aristotle's title once again – *poetry* in an ordinary sense. *Truth happens in art as poetry*: 'All art, as letting the advent of the truth of beings happen, is as such *essentially poetry* [*Dichtung*]' (GA 5: 59). Correspondingly, all philosophy of art – to say nothing of aesthetics – must become a thinking of poetry, that is, *poetics*.

Poetic thus reinscribed could also reinscribe *mimesis*. Of course, it could not be, any more than in Aristotle, a matter of simple imitation, as though the work of art were an image simply reproducing within certain limits some actually existing beings. But also it could not be a matter of imitating something universal, or representing within an individual being some universal form or truth by which being would, in the classical sense, be determined. The work of art does not imitate any being, whether individual or universal; it does not imitate anything that would simply *be* prior to the imitation, that would be set over against the imitation, which, then, would only double something already subsisting in itself. Indeed, one could say that the work of art *imitates nothing*, though one would need to regard such imitation of nothing, not as dissolving the riddle of mimesis (relegating it perhaps to some previous thinking of art that is now overcome), but rather as posing that riddle in the most unsettling way. Need it be said, after Heidegger, that the nothing is nothing simple? Indeed, one could say even that truth is nothing as long as it has not found a setting; and even in its setting, differentiated in the manifold reciprocity from the being in which it is set, it is (as differentiated from beings) still nothing.

It is, then, in the relation of the work of art to truth that a trace of mimesis is to be discerned: art as mimesis of truth. It would be a mimesis not preceded by truth, a mimesis that would take place precisely in giving place to truth, in that setting of truth into the work that is also a setting of the work into truth, that setting of truth into its limit. It would be a mimesis that would take place in and as the *Gestalt* in which truth would be set into the work, placed there, without having preceded the work and yet in such a way as to be doubled in the play of reciprocity between the work of art and the strife of world and earth. It is in this doubling – by which the Greek temple once brought into play the strife of world and earth into which it was, in turn, set – that mimesis can be rethought and reinscribed within Heidegger's poetics.

## Notes

1 *Kants Werke: Akademie Textausgabe* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), 5: 308.

2 *ibid.*, 5: 306.

3 All references to works by Heidegger are to the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975ff.). Such references will be indicated by 'GA' and given in the text by volume number and page number.

4 F.-W. von Herrmann. *Heideggers Philosophie der Kunst* (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1980), 94.

5 'Die Irre ist das wesentliche Gegenwesen zum anfänglichen Wesen der Wahrheit.' *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* (GA 9: 197).

6 Cf. von Herrmann. *Heideggers Philosophie der Kunst*, 259–60.

7 'Stellen und Legen haben den Sinn von: *Her-* ins Unverborgene, *vor-* in das Anwesende bringen, d.h. vorliegenlassen.' GA 5: 70.



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## Heidegger, madness and well-being

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Charles E. Scott

Any theory or description of Being that tells us nothing about human health and sickness remains irrelevantly abstract. Both Plato and Aristotle, as well as many of their predecessors and their successors, saw clearly that when one reflects on the meaning of 'is' he is asking about what human being is rightfully to be. Classically, knowledge issues into wisdom when one is able to decide, plan, remember, and relate to other people and to nonhuman beings in light of what is 'really real', i.e., when he *becomes* harmonious with being. Medieval scholastic philosophy characteristically culminates in worship of God and obedience to Him, because the full meaning (the living health) of human being is seen to occur as the creature affirms in a feeling, thinking, willing way his place within the divinely ordained scheme of things.

Counterwise, any understanding of human well-being assumes an idea of how man is in the world, whether or not that understanding is brought to thematic awareness. The assumption, for example, that physical illness is solely a matter of physical malfunctioning, that health is fully restored when an 'ill' part of a physical structure begins to function properly, assumes that the human body is best understood in totally objective, materialistic terms. Yet, health is a way of being, as is illness, not something that we possess as secondary to our existence. We *are* healthy or ill. How are we to understand this *are*? If we are like machines, how are we to understand the immediate event of being that way?

Heidegger's reflections, both early and late, also make claims about the fulfillment and injury of human being. Until one discovers the full import for human well-being and illness of his understanding of being as nonsubstantial, nonsubjectivistic, and nonintentional event, the meaning of being human, on his terms, is not adequately interpreted. His thinking – or better, the center of his thought – finds its fulfillment in an individual's release to his own responsive openness with the claiming

disclosures of beings. The purpose of this paper is to understand aspects of this last phrase, 'release to his own responsive openness with the claiming disclosures of beings', by dealing with two approaches to schizophrenia. I shall focus my remarks in the work of Ludwig Binswanger and Medard Boss, each of whom developed an understanding of psychopathology and health out of his own psychotherapeutic work, informed principally by Freud, and by his interpretation of Heidegger's thought.

We philosophers are usually spared, in our professions, dealing with insanity. Madness is more like a shadow for the enlightened and familiar realm of ideological connections. We challenge popular and everyday thought with its unchecked and unclarified values and assumptions. We take pride in mental freedom, the well-stated insight, the coherence of our thoughts. We are, however, fundamentally indebted to our patron, who found his wisdom by virtue of his ignorance. In spite of most schools' attempts to refashion Socrates in their own intelligence, he is above all else the man who asked questions because of what he did not know and who was led by an *eros* that often makes our work seem rather more clever than passionate. His capacity to bring into the light of ignorance the learning and intelligence of his time remains as the soul of philosophy.

Schizophrenia is a phenomenon of human illness in which the shadows of philosophy – disconnection, exaggeration, disorder, fantasy, radical dependence, withdrawn silence, hiddenness – make up the individual's particular way of being. Even the type of illness designated by this name is subject to no sufficient definition and is utterly vague as to what, exactly, it designates. In confronting what is called by the name, we encounter not just people who have 'lost touch with reality' in subtle as well as in frightening ways, we also encounter human being in ways that allow us to recognize aspects of our own existence in what we call madness. As philosophers, when we turn to madness, we join two remarkable human possibilities: the one, to be with things in a clarifying way, and the other, to be with things in the world as though logic were irrelevant for what we experience as real.

When madness is taken as a phenomenon, as a way human being is presented, we are less inclined to explain it or to provide conceptual analyses of the word's usage than we are to see human being as it happens in these certain ways. We allow it to be as it is, to show itself forth as we say, to cast its light on our learning and beliefs. And by confronting it, we confront the ignorance or shadow of philosophy. We come to see the openness of our own being which in no way finds its horizons in rational good sense or in steady, logical clarity. As a phenomenon, schizophrenia shows us at once how we may stand open in the presence of beings, falling utterly prey to *them* and suffering misery in a denial of *our* being, which we as philosophers may describe, but never,

as describers and clarifiers, bring to its own fulfillment. We are again cast into the light of philosophy's ignorance and may hope thereby to discover some measure of wisdom that is withheld as long as we try to live primarily in the clarity of our conceptual visions. By thinking in the light of human being gone mad, we are able to see part of the meaning of conceptualization: that it culminates in questions because conceptual activity does not happen as the fulfillment or completion of its subject matter. Madness occurs as the deprivation of human being, which no amount of description can restore, and as the disclosure of human being as a part of which conceptualization also occurs.

By virtue of conceptualization, however, we are able to interpret how we are to be, and our interpretations incline us toward certain directions of investigation, certain questions, particular ways of being, and the ideals in light of which we make our decisions and give cultural direction for ourselves. On these directions depend what we esteem and despise and to what extent we are able to look for what can, in fact, provide human fulfillment. Mental health has been interpreted largely as though human being did not occur, and the ideals for mental health have been developed as though man were best understood as an investigated object: the history of psychological and psychotherapeutic theory forms a large and important section in our cultural text of ontological forgetfulness. The result has been that sciences about man, but not a descriptive understanding of human being, have been the principal interpreters of what madness and health mean. Our conceptual task is consequently twofold: to call attention to the relevance of ontological descriptions for reconsidering the meaning of 'mental disease' (the task of this paper) and to structure a new approach to human misery and health that makes as the center of its focus the way human being happens.

## I Claim, answer, and openness

The position which I shall describe for our purposes, but shall not attempt to found, is that human existence happens at once as claim and as answer. 'Claim and answer' describe something about what 'standing responsively in the open' means, i.e., the phrase elucidates Heidegger's understanding of *Ek-stasis*. *Claim* has the sense of 'to cry out' or 'to call' in its Old French heritage. 'Answer', coming from the Anglo-Saxon *and*, against, with *swerian*, to swear, can mean 'to be in conformity', 'to be adequate', 'giving attention', 'to act in response'. 'Attention', which shall also help in our discussion, means, for our purposes, 'state of giving heed' and 'readiness for what is given'. Human existence is a state of giving heed in the immediate presence of beings. The question of human

health has to do with how one attends to the claims and the responsiveness that make up his being in the world.

A being, some particular thing, happens as something that can be named, but does not come about by virtue of being designated.<sup>1</sup> It happens immediately as available for appropriation or designation: it happens *as* something, as meaningful. The stress falls on the happening of the thing. It takes place and is a place, not outside of our existence, but as immediately composing or constituting our existence, i.e., human being 'stands out' with beings and is worldwide in its scope. One might think of human existence as an 'inner' region, out of which one moves into an 'outside' region where things are, and in which things on the 'outside' are imagined. The claim that we are working with, to the contrary, is based on the observation that human existence happens as openness with the immediate presence of beings. Beings are not inaccessible and brute objects. They are given availabilities that mean something immediately in the way they occur, and which, in their occurring, bestow meaning, i.e., compose meanings, in existence.

When one takes an explanatory approach and sees things in terms of explanations, he may well ask, 'Yes, but isn't all this founded on such material conditions as brains, sensations, *a priori* structures, and so on? What are the *causes* of meaningful beings?' The nonexplanatory and descriptive way of seeing responds: 'Regardless what the conditions are and regardless what causes one hypothesizes, human existence does not happen as a condition or as a cause. "Condition" and "cause" have their meaning in explanatory interests. Human existence *is* not an explanation, nor are the happenings that we name and describe explanations. They are occurrences, here in certain ways, which compose the living event of being human. Our explanatory interests always idealize those things by placing them into a context of meaning which is imposed on their fundamental happening. That can issue in helpful beliefs and knowledge, but it always issues in confusion when one assumes that by explanation he describes the way things *are*.'

When something occurs it says itself in the sense that it occurs as something. We are always immediately imbued with a sense for what something is or is not, such that we *can* shut the door or pick up the pen, and such that we *can* be uncertain about a thing and feel the need to examine it further. 'What is that thing?' means, 'How is something that is present happening?'

Although the meaning of *claim* in the sense of 'to cry out' sounds rather too explosive or dramatic, the sense of 'saying itself' or 'to call' is helpful in interpreting how a being happens. It is present as something, never as nothing at all, and as something a being occasions an immediate range of possibilities for affirmation, negation, indifference, modification, explanation, appreciation. It happens as an address. *Dress*, in its French

derivation, meant to straighten or arrange. A being happens as a given composition or arrangement, *something* simply there, but not inertly there. 'There' as a saying, as coming forth, as a claim, as an event with which I am immediately in the possibilities that it occasions.

The immediate complement of 'claim' is 'answer'. Human existence says itself. That means that it is present always as someone. To be someone is to be a state of giving heed in the presence of beings. Even when I refuse a claim and turn away from it, I am attending to it, and I am in conformity with it in the sense that I respond with it, hear it, and answer. Whether or not I am conceptually self-aware, I am an attentive state as I pick up these things, avoid those, seek out others, et cetera. Answering need not be deliberate, then, but is my being 'this' way with 'these' claims. Meanings and being one's own event (i.e., *Eigenstaendigkeit*) are thus found to be nonreducible in human existence.

The genre of madness called schizophrenia within the *Dasein's* analytical approach has to do with the encroachment and constriction of the human capacity to answer and with a consequent domination by immediate claims. We need now to emphasize that being *at once* claim and answer, human existence is responsively open with the claiming disclosures of beings. It stands open in the availability of what immediately happens. Its hearing is the answered presence of what comes forth. The vulnerability of human existence is frequently remarked, and man's fear of his own state of being is frequently discussed. We are remarkably undefended in the immediacy of our being. We are constituted by givennesses which have at once the character of gift and threat because immediacy is neither deserved nor avoidable. When we answer by backing away from our own state of givenness, from what is given, and from the inevitability of answering, we literally refuse our own being, a refusal that immediately countenances what we refuse. This deep contradiction is lived as injury and misery, self-encroachment in the most profound sense, because in this case we are open (i.e., disclosive) in the disclosure of what is present by denying both our responsiveness and the meaningful presences. The at-onceness of claim and answer is elucidated by Boss's concept of perceptive world-openness.<sup>2</sup> Perceptive world-openness provides a basis for understanding what happens in schizophrenia. I interpret the term to name the happening of man and beings inseparably, the wholeness of human existence in which, primordially, there is neither subject nor object, but an answering presence in the composing presence of what is. *Compose*, a word I am using to interpret the immediacy of beings with human beings, but a word which Boss, Binswanger, and Heidegger do not use, has the interesting overtones of both 'to make up' and 'to be harmonious'. (I do not have in mind the transitive and agent-oriented sense of 'to put together'.<sup>3</sup>) It has the root of *poser*, to place, and with the *com* can mean 'in place with', i.e., free of

disturbance, fully appropriate. So 'composure' may be taken as an arrangement that is internally appropriate to itself. *Repose* is formed from the Latin *pausare*, to pause. It can mean both 'composure of manner' and 'state of rest'. These words help us to state how the living part-whole relation of human existence happens: human existence is rightfully to be a repose in its composure; it comes to bear as a way of preserving the claims that constitute it in the ways it answers them. Human existence is primordially a composure. It is being in the world – an ex-sisting out in the uncoveredness of beings. But a person may live contrary to his composure. He may be unable to tolerate his own world-openness in a free and open way. He is then not at peace in his relations in the world. The world happens for him in agitation – quite the opposite of being reposed in one's particular openness in the world. Human existence finds fulfillment when beings, which make up immediately its particular concrete moment, and its own possibilities for hearing and responding, which make up its given world-openness with beings, are borne or allowed or affirmed consonant with the way they are primordially together. The overtone of such statements is that when human being gives pause to the claims of beings in a way that is consonant with its own possibilities for hearing, i.e., its immediate openness, and with the beings themselves, a repose occurs that is a state of appropriateness vis-à-vis the particular disclosure and the disclosiveness or openness of the whole. The person then lives as a way of preserving the openness of being and beings, as a release to openness, as a profound repose with his being. One is then free to allow, choose, limit, and direct without denying the claiming, responding world-openness that he is as he allows, chooses, et cetera.

## II Binswanger: world-design and transcendence

Binswanger has termed his reading of Heidegger a productive misunderstanding. I shall focus on one element of his misunderstanding in order to highlight the significance of Heidegger's work for our comprehension of human madness and well-being. We begin with ontological references, because both Binswanger and Boss have learned from Heidegger that human madness and well-being have to do with the ontological characteristics of being-in-the-world. The effort is to interpret human being so as to see the way a particular person is to be, i.e., so as to understand what sickness and health mean by reference to how human being occurs in all cases.

For our purposes, the most important element in Heidegger's way of seeing is his radically nonsubjectivistic comprehension of human being. By virtue of seeing this way, he has enabled us to approach health and

healing by reference to our primordial presence in the presence of beings. Traditionally, people have responded to the pervasiveness and primordially of being with theories about 'the unconscious', a realm taken to 'transcend' man's rational, clarifying, and volitional consciousness and to be constituted by the dark, nonappearing preconscious or unconscious aspects of his psyche. But the entire framework of consciousness, unconsciousness, and symbolic mediation between them falls away as unnecessary when one begins to see human being as openness with the disclosure of beings, as distinct to a subjective structure that is 'bordered' or 'fenced in' by an imaginative structure for the reception of things on the other side of it. Binswanger pointed out 'the fatal dichotomy of world in subject and object'. He saw with elegant insight that traditional psychology and psychiatry reduced human being 'to a mere subject, to a worldless rump subject in which all sorts of happenings, events, and functions occur . . . without anybody, however, being able to say . . . how the subjects can ever meet an object and can communicate and arrive at an understanding with other subjects'.<sup>4</sup> But he himself was still captured by the subject-oriented approach to human being and was not able to make purchase of Heidegger's most important contribution to an interpretation of human well-being.

Binswanger read *Being and Time* as a study of the structural unity of human existence and interpreted it as an investigation of transcendental subjectivity. The 'existentials' are thus rendered by him as a transcendental, *a priori* structure that gives meaning to what occurs. Heidegger's work is 'an extremely consistent development and extension of fundamental philosophical theories, namely Kant's theory about the conditions and possibilities of experience (in the natural-scientific sense) on the one hand, and of Husserl's theory of transcendental phenomenology on the other'.<sup>5</sup> Heidegger has 'elucidated the structure of subjectivity as transcendence'.<sup>6</sup>

Consequent to this interpretation, he understands Care, for example, as 'being in the world for the sake of myself', as the meaning of inward subjectivity, instead of as the meaning of standing *open* in the world with the uncoveredness of beings.<sup>7</sup> He renders Thrownness as naming the given determinations of human existence, such as instinct and heredity. *Thrownness* names that dimension of human being which a person is without consent, and it functions as an explanatory, *a priori* structure which is taken to be ontologically prior to the disclosure of beings. The individual is 'enclosed, possessed, and compelled' in his Thrownness.<sup>8</sup> Care, on this reading, has the sense of self-enclosed self-concern, and Binswanger finds need to develop the supplementary idea of 'being beyond the world', which he calls love. He found this further move necessary because he did not see the full meaning of Care as openness with beings. He knew that the self is worldly in its structures, but he

did not attend to the open eventfulness of being *in* the world in which self-concern, only one aspect of Care, happens as openness with the disclosures of beings. There is no 'sphere' out of which one needs to 'transcend,' unless self-concern be taken as an *enclosed* transcendental dimension instead of a way in which beings come forth. Thrownness has the sense of blind necessity, and Binswanger deals with Thrownness as human powerlessness, i.e., in quasi-volitional terms, until one chooses his Thrownness and achieves, by his limiting choice, power. Thrownness is thus taken by him as closedness over against the world, as 'having an environment like an animal',<sup>9</sup> and that involves him immediately in a split within man of the human and nonhuman. Man, on this counting, transcends worldliness, which is a contradiction in terms when one defines man as being-in-the-world.

The emphasis on self-enclosure and volitional self-transcendence in both cases occurs because he has failed to see that Care and Thrownness, as well as all other ontological elements, do not in fact name *a priori* elements of transcendental subjectivity, but ways in which man is immediately with beings, i.e., ways human being is open *in* the openness of the world. And being open in the openness of the world is the polar opposite to self-*enclosed* self-concern and to *blind* (i.e., meaningless) determinism prior to choice. In both cases, Binswanger has adopted an approach that assumes that 'one has to start at transcendental subjectivity'<sup>10</sup> instead of with Ek-stasis or openness in the openness of the world. Viewed in the latter emphasis, concern for oneself or the experience of given determination happen as ways of being *with* beings, and these two existentials, like the others, have their meaning *in the particular ways in which worldly relations occur, never in a trans-worldly, a priori dimension reached by inferential thought*. Loving is a way of relating caringly with beings, and being determined is a way beings appear. Neither Care nor Thrownness name for Heidegger a dimension apart from the disclosiveness of world-relations.

'World-design' is the term that stands at the center of Binswanger's approach to human being. The temporal, transcendental ego constitutes itself by 'directing itself' toward things. How a particular human existence is may be discovered by how it has designed its world. How it has misunderstood itself in its particular world-design may be discovered by reference to the transcendental, *a priori* structure of human subjectivity, which is the grounds or possibility for all world-designs. Binswanger found, for example, that manics have similar world-designs and are thus subject to general description and classification. He found, further, that when a world-design is founded in only a few of the fundamental possibilities of human subjectivity, one must constantly retreat from the worldly presences that he has systematically ruled out of his world, that 'in mental diseases we face modifications of the fundamental or essential



structure and of the structural links of being-in-the-world as transcendence'.<sup>11</sup> 'Thus, doing existential analysis in the area of psychiatry means to examine and describe how the various forms of the mentally ill, and each one from himself, designs the world, establishes their self, and, in the widest sense, act and love.'<sup>12</sup> The structure of being-in-the-world 'places a norm at our disposal and so enables us to determine deviations from this norm in the manner of the exact sciences'.<sup>13</sup> And the structure of the specific world-design allows us to understand the way he relates to persons and things.

This conjunction of subjective transcendence and particular world-designs allows Binswanger to describe schizophrenic illness, for example, with regard to Extravagance, Rigidity, Covering, and Retreat. Schizophrenia is an 'ontological disorder', lived as the 'inconsistency of experience' that happens as one designs his world in a way that denies elements of *Dasein's* transcendental 'structural order'.<sup>14</sup> Instead of being able to allow things to appear as they are according to his fundamental structure of experience, the sick person tries to enforce a certain restricting order onto things. He may flee the uncertainty of existence, its mundanity, its quality of constant change, his answerableness for what he chooses. Consequently his ideal of unbroken continuity, for example, constantly comes up against change, beginning and ending, absence, loss, growth, and decay. He seeks to escape this inconsistency of experience by ever more extravagant ideals and actions designed to deny or destroy the threat intrinsic in the relation of his inadequate world-design to the structures of his existence. His own design, though quite consistent within itself, 'has all the earmarks of the larger inconsistency'.<sup>15</sup> He responds to this hard and fast stance by his impossible expectations and intentions. So, much of the world as it is constituted by his transcendental structure of experience denies the limits of his design, and he lives always with the threat that his world will be destroyed by forces impinging 'from the outside'. Everything in his world witnesses to a pervasive deficiency, and he is driven to cover over the threatening elements that deny the design on which he has staked his life. This futile project of covering what is intrinsic to his own being-in-the-world wears him away until he is forced to retreat and renounce the struggle by the fatigue caused by the impossibly burdening scheme. The culmination of this process is the autism characteristic of schizophrenic psychosis. One has been 'overwhelmed by a certain world-design', which is the opposite of letting the world occur according to the inevitabilities of being-in-the-world.<sup>16</sup>

Binswanger thus conceives of things encroaching on the schizophrenic because his world-design has refused central aspects of his transcendental subjectivity. The encroachment of beings and the consequent withdrawal and paranoia have their meaning in the overly limited world-design of the patient in relation to his *a priori* transcendental structure.

This understanding of madness develops out of a theory of intentionality founded in a structure of finitude. Binswanger says that Heidegger has shown 'how the intentionality of consciousness is grounded in the temporality of human existence, in *Dasein*. Intentionality in general is only possible on the basis of "transcendence" and is thus neither identical with it nor, conversely, does it make transcendence possible.'<sup>17</sup> *Because* intentionality is not identical with 'transcendence' *can* an illness like schizophrenia occur, i.e., my world-design is able to be a refusal of parts of its own grounds. Or put again into Binswanger's language, 'the transcendental ego' is 'included' in the 'actual ego',<sup>18</sup> and thus how I live can be a denial of how my being occurs.

But Binswanger describes the world-process by reference to something that he cannot, in principle, see, viz., a structure that transcends the world-occurrences and cannot be found in the purity that he posits for it. He thinks of being-in-the-world as a transcendental/worldly set of necessary categories: transcendence, he says, 'strides and swings' toward the world, as well as withdraws from the world and limits it. By choosing, i.e., limiting, one gains power 'over the world'. He has thus described worldly occurrence by reference to a ground reached by inference, i.e., by an idealization, and he has conceived this transcendental ground, which is termed being-in-the-world, as not being in the world, but as the apodictic necessity for world-occurrences. That is, he has conceived of human being as trans-worldly, and in that sense as an enclosed subjectivity. Heidegger's overcoming of that very way of thinking, his effort to describe how beings come forth *in* their disclosiveness (not in what is not disclosed – a transcending realm), lies at the heart of his interpretation of being. He describes how something comes forth *in* its coming forth. He describes its disclosure, its happening, and that means that one attends to a being in its occurrence. In contrast to Binswanger, for whom the grounds of description are not subject to direct description, Heidegger finds the grounds of description only in the occurrence of what comes forth. For Binswanger, the meaning of *is* is to be found by inferential thought, because he begins with the assumption that transcendental subjectivity is the basis for what occurs. Heidegger finds no basis for that assumption. Rather, when one begins with what does not come forth, he diverts himself away from how something happens and also keeps a subjective orientation toward phenomena. That, in effect, is an instance of covering the phenomena and of forgetting the disclosive openness of being.

By pointing out Binswanger's departure from Heidegger, my purpose has been to note an understanding of mental illness, and by implication, well-being, which is ontologically founded, but which has not taken account of the world-openness and immediate disclosiveness of being-in-the-world. The full import of Heidegger's thought for being ill and well

cannot be seen until we have struggled beyond all assumptions founded on the primacy of subjectivity and have come to see that being human is a worldwide event in which the *openness* of being-in-the-world can be encroached upon or fulfilled, not by virtue of world-designs founded in some third, transcendental power, but by virtue of our allowing and refusing the immediacy of being-in-the-world. In this instance, the forthcoming of what appears is the focus of attention, not a posited transcendental subjectivity, which functions as an explanatory principle, but not as a description of what is given.

### III Boss: answering world-openness

The basis for Binswanger's understanding of schizophrenia as well as for human existence in general is, as we have seen, an acceptance of the hypothesis that human awareness is intentional and transcendental in nature. The transcendental basis is clearly hypothetically rather than descriptively discussed, as witnessed by his assumption of the 'fact' that the structure of seeing is itself not subject to direct description. The foundation of world-designs is to be taken on Binswanger's terms as not directly describable, but rather as induced in order to explain what is describable. In form the position is close to Freud's early observation that the doctrines about instincts are 'our myth', although this myth later gained a status, within his thought, closer to fact as he based more and more of his observations on it. The describable, for Binswanger, is to be understood by reference to the hypothetical, and he understands the structure of being-in-the-world not to be a direct description of the immediacy of being-in, but to be a highly promising hypothesis that becomes believable as we apply it to phenomena and lucidate them by it.

This position is profoundly different from Heidegger's descriptions of disclosiveness in which he gives an account of the immediacy of coming-forth. What Binswanger thinks not to be directly describable – the ontological foundations of what comes forth – is what Heidegger describes. This difference happens because Heidegger gave up the assumption of transcendental subjectivity from the beginning and attended solely to how phenomena are immediately present.

Boss has made this description on Heidegger's part the basis of his understanding of human well-being and illness. The schizophrenic, for example, is not primarily trapped by a self-defeating world-design, but is a person who is *open* in the world in a way that denies significant aspects of his world-openness. He lives a denial of how immediacy, in part, occurs, a denial of his perceptive world-openness. For Boss, the claims of beings are not products of human volition or of *a priori*

intentional structures, and are consequently not to be taken as aspects of a world-design. Mental illness *happens* fundamentally in the immediate presence of beings, in the way beings come forth such that one can have designs involving them. Human being is found to be composed of nonintentional ways of being open, *not* for contents that come to it, but *in* the immediate happening of beings. There is no effort on Boss's or Heidegger's part to explain why human being happens the way that it does. The effort, rather, is to describe how it happens. The link to health and illness is that how a human being is open with the disclosures of beings is the living moment of a person, that health and illness are how a person is immediately with beings.

The burden of Heidegger's descriptions is to show the structure of world-openness, and his radicalness within the phenomenological tradition is that this structure is found not to be *a priori* in any way analogous to Kant's Categories of the Understanding. It is found, rather, to be the structure of immediate givenness, of being *in* the world immediately. He is describing world-openness, the presence together at once of man and beings. We seem to be in the world in common ways and to share a world significantly common in spite of variety and difference. Nights and days, the past, present, and future, meanings, limitations, groundedness, freedom, appear commonly. And the basis of this common world-openness is not an external attribute of man, but is his being in common with what happens in particular. This commonness composes his event, his happening, the way he is.

We may say in this context that schizophrenic illness happens as an encroachment on a person's world-openness. *Encroach* has the meaning of 'to enter by stealth into the possessions or rights of another', 'to trespass', 'to advance beyond desirable or normal limits'. As we turn now to Boss's description of schizophrenia, we are dealing with a way in which a person experiences the encroachment of the immediate claims of beings, i.e., we are dealing with the weakness of one's responsiveness with the claims of beings that compose his own particular being-in-the-world. The task of Section One of this paper was to indicate that beings happen as immediate claims with the responsiveness of man, that human being is at once answering openness with the disclosures of beings. That means that bearing or preserving what occurs is man's answering presence with what comes forth claimingly (i.e., meaningfully). When one finds himself unable to answer, a deep confusion of human being occurs. Not only is the basis of continuity deeply disturbed.<sup>19</sup> Beings themselves happen as unborne or as unpreserved, as an unanswered helter-skelter with which one finds himself absorbed as though *he* were hardly there.

'When seen from a daseinsanalytic or phenomenological viewpoint, the schizophrenic stands revealed as a human who is essentially and characteristically, in a specific way, no longer able to ek-sist, i.e., to bear

and maintain this being-open according to the norms [that are the human being's way of standing in the openness with what comes forth]. They are less able than all other existing people to maintain a free, open stance to what encounters them, to what, together with them, is manifest to all waking fellow humans in their surroundings.' 'There is no loosening of some postulated thought processes or associations. Rather, the whole existing of the schizophrenic, i.e., the whole spanning-the-world, as a free openness of perceiving and understanding of what is present is disturbed. . . .' The schizophrenic 'is in an especially high degree unable to open himself freely to the address of the realities of his world, to commit himself freely in his response to them, and yet preserve the independence of himself'. Rather, the schizophrenic in varying degrees, 'falls helplessly unfree under the spell of the address of what he encounters'.<sup>20</sup>

Specifically, the schizophrenic process, in its beginning phases, may be seen by reference to a patient who found himself ensnared by everything he saw. The chair compelled him to sit on it. A spot on the wall forced him to consider and consider it. Everything he encountered threatened to 'snatch him under its sway'. 'Things', he said, 'give me no peace, and I cannot leave them in peace.'

As this inability to answer the address of beings grows, one finds himself increasingly 'benumbed by what he observes' so that 'he no longer has any distance from it, no longer has anything confronting him'. He 'loses the thread to himself'. This more advanced development is exemplified in a man who sees a clock on the wall and finds that the clock becomes dispersed so that the parts do not fit into a whole, but are scattered and random. As long as he could see the clock as a particular thing distinct from him he found himself differentiated and to a degree independent of the clock. But his relation to the clock becomes entirely different as the clock becomes fragmented. He finds himself in the observation engulfed into the observed. 'I am lost when I watch the clock on the wall', he says. 'It runs away out of itself. I am volatile, and I'm no longer present. I only know: the clock jumps around with many hands and cannot be brought together properly.' 'I am myself clock', he says. He has fallen prey to the clock, which has become, in the changed relationship, an *overpowering* claim, an event in which significance and place are lost as he becomes utterly mute in its presence. Rather than finding himself 'surrendered' over to something left out of his intentional design, he is engulfed by a claim that, in his dissolved responsiveness, loses its difference in its event with him, and he lives with it in its taking over his world-openness. This event does not happen with an object outside his existence. He and the wall and the clock occur with each other, and the sickness happens as the way they are together. His injured

responsiveness is his inability to be with the wall clock in its presence without finding himself in the possession of the appearing occurrence.

By attending to the way this world-relation happened, Boss has provided a description of the illness without appealing to a nonappearing superstructure or to a presumed isolated inwardness. The wall clock and the man were together in a particular way that need not be covered over by explanatory hypotheses in order to understand the way the schizophrenic episode occurred. The emphasis falls, rather, on this man's relation to the particular clock and not to time in general or to clocks in general. The focus is on how he and the clock happened together, how the clock addresses him. He finds himself in a decreasing relation with the clock as he becomes more absorbed in it. Under the circumstances, he may either, given enough strength, refocus the clock so that he again occurs as answering, as finding the clock an option for attention among other options, finding that he may respond to it in a variety of ways. Or he may withdraw from the encroachment on him, narrowing down his world-relations as much as possible so as to avoid being arrested and taken over by any claims whatsoever. He would then ward off and back away from all claims in order to avoid his being engulfed by what shows itself.

As a final example, we shall consider a patient termed the 'sun-man'. This lonely man lost contact with his only friend and shortly thereafter experienced the sun on the wall on his bedroom. It was at night, and the sun traversed the wall in an arching pattern during a several-hour period. Underneath the sun (which he saw as a small disc) was the figure of a man sleeping. The patient was awake during the event and in a state of extreme anxiety. Afterwards he was hospitalized in a mute, psychotic state. The episode was past after a few weeks of treatment, and the man returned to his life of working in a factory and living with his family. In a follow-up interview a year later he said, 'Through my illness it has become clear to me that one is dependent on the others. If one neglects the relationship to the other, he does not get anywhere and has no direction any more'. He said also, 'The sun was for me the supreme power from which all life and all growth proceeds'.

For our purposes we need to note that the patient experienced a dissolution into sheer light and power when his primary, concrete relation to another person failed. 'The collapse of his previous, narrowly confined world-relation changed suddenly to an unprecedented expansion beyond the old limitations of the openness of this existence.' Like the man-figure sleeping in the hallucination, he found himself at once devoid of nourishing human contact and wakeful responsiveness. He was threatened by dissolution into 'the supreme power from which all life and all growth proceeds'. He felt in extreme danger of total annihilation in the presence of that power, given the collapse of his one 'reliable

relation' that provided for him the focus of his world-relations. 'An unlimited incandescence . . . took the place of the once easily and joyfully born warmth of a concrete, limited relationship, to a friend, to a fellow human. He, in his radically weakened world relationships, experienced a radical threat of dissolution into his being.'

Boss describes this occurrence as a 'psychotic, unbounded being-in-the-world' in which the 'sun' 'disclosed something of the most hidden nature of that which holds sovereign sway behind everything'. 'The psychotic disruption of the boundaries of *Da-sein*, the widening of the being-open of an existence, often seems to go hand in hand with a "super-human" penetrability for the address of what is not observable in the everyday, but yet is the foundation of the everyday. . . . Nevertheless, schizophrenically ill patients prove to be people who are not equal to their supersensitivity. If they could stand firm in the face of what they perceived, they would not be sick, but would become and remain a visionary with genius, a philosopher, or a poet. So the bursting of the limits of the *Dasein* of schizophrenically ill people is not accompanied by a greater freedom, but by a serious encroachment on the freedom of their existing.'<sup>21</sup>

The basis of the methodological and theoretical differences between Boss and Binswanger is clear: Boss has made directly accessible *Ek-sistenz* and its encroachment the foundation for his understanding of human illness and well-being, whereas Binswanger has made intentional consciousness and a deduced transcendence his points of primary theoretical reference. In both cases they have found that human being, although quite differently interpreted, is the source for an adequate thematic grasp of sickness and health. Otherwise, they find, we are at the prey of assumptions which give direction for our efforts to be self-fulfilled, assumptions in relation to which we abnegate our responsibility because we have no clear grasp of who we are in our being. Human being, often taken as a mere abstraction, we find to be the deciding factor for the most concrete of human experiences: misery and well-being.

#### **IV Well-being**

Being well and ill inevitably raises the question of the meaning of being here as we are. People have always looked for norms because they experience fulfillment and deprivation. The difference between the two is remarkably great, and we all try to find the deciding factors, the demands to be met. Whether people fed virgins to the gods or tried to discover the 'nature' of things, they have done what they did, in significant measure, because of the experiences of suffering and well-being.

But soothing angry gods by sacrifice and treating ourselves as objects of investigation both ignore the significance of our happening as a temporal immediacy that is aware – the strangest phenomenon of all, the strangeness of which is intensified yet more when this event, this ‘species’, considers its own place within the seemingly infinite range of what it finds stretched out before it. Or when it confronts its own kind that are so odd, so sick, or so limited that it finds itself distorted terribly in the image it faces. Or when it finds madness as one of its own possibilities, along with the possibilities of joy and purpose.

The task is first to find where to look for the ‘norms’. Characteristically, in our tradition we have looked toward what we do not see, but which we think is necessary for what we do see, or we have looked at things with methods of looking that cannot take account of the immediacy of what is happening. In both approaches the immediacy of our own happening is lost or ignored. In the case of human being, that means that our norms for health and illness have not been focused on how man is with beings immediately. The psychotherapeutic appropriation of Heidegger makes apparent that the immediacy of being in the world is both nonsubstantial and aware, a fully historical event: we are such a happening, and health and illness are lived as nonsubstantial, temporal events of awareness. That is ‘where’ we must look in order to interpret our possibilities for being well and ill.

Heidegger has taken the temporal immediacy of awareness with unsurpassed seriousness. The judgment of many philosophers that his thought is elusive and vague has arisen because our standards for correctness and clarity have been so limited as virtually to ignore how human being happens, as distinct to accounting for the composition of many of the conditions necessary for the happening. We have looked away from the disclosive happening of human being by means of hypothetical and empirical investigations into what has to be present in order for man to be. When the necessary conditions are disturbed, man is surely disturbed. But the *meaning* of human being is to be found in how man’s worldly presence occurs. And by understanding the being of man, we understand how madness and well-being occur and what constitutes the fulfillment and injury of us in our uniqueness. At least a direction for developing this thought can be pointed out by recalling aspects of Heidegger’s theory of truth.

He has shown, with unsurpassed clarity, the limits of the idea that truth is correspondence, with its assumption of a *separated* agency and the option of truth as disclosure.<sup>22</sup> Human being happens as a ‘region for relating’, a standing open in the occurrence of beings, a letting be of what comes forth. Being free, in this context, is being open for beings. Human being is a granting occurrence in the sense that it allows the opening forth of beings. Being free is fundamentally the same as Ek-



stasis, an 'admitting of the uncoveredness of beings', 'a standing out in the uncoveredness of beings'.<sup>23</sup> In particular, when a person does not resist the disclosive immediacy of being, when he 'openly welcomes the uncoveredness of beings', he is 'free for his own freedom'. That is, he responds openly in his own world-openness. He grants his own exposure in the disclosiveness of what occurs and *there-by* 'stands with' his 'possibilities for choice' in the givennesses, the beings, of his existence. This positive and individual attunement to the openness of being-in-the-world is the key to well-being. Its opposite, denying or refusing one's fundamental allowance of what comes forth, constitutes in a variety of ways what we call mental illness. This refusal is also a rejection of the chance to choose, because one then refuses or is unable to countenance the possibilities and presences which found the choice.

Given this fundamental understanding of truth and well-being, Boss has rejected the classical psychoanalytical notion that healing occurs as one releases a tension that has developed between 'unconscious and conscious' elements of the psyche. The traditional notion in effect begins by treating human awareness as though it were an enclosed phenomenon that is world-related only because of physical sense relations to the 'outside' world and symbolic representatives of what is separated from him. Madness is interpreted as a radical form of self-violation, and 'self' is assumed from the outset to be an interior, instinctual, imaginal realm, multi-dimensional, and basically isolated. 'Interior' patterns of association are taken to be more concrete than the way things happen. In Binswanger's phrase, cited above, 'a worldless rump subject' functions with axiomatic power in this conceptuality.

Yet Binswanger understood insanity as a destructive tension between a person's world-design and his transcendental subjectivity, whereas mental health is taken to be a fundamental harmony between world-design and transcendence.<sup>24</sup> Boss, on the other hand, conceives of madness as a *privation* of fundamental human possibilities found in world-openness. Mental disturbances occur as a person lives a denial of his fundamental world-openness and is unable to respond fully with the disclosures that make up his worldly presence. Healing happens with a profound countenancing of his 'truth', his standing out in the uncoveredness of beings, and of the claims that make up his particular way of being. Well-being occurs as a fulfillment of 'possibilities for world-relation' which in either a deprived or fulfilled state occur as the structure of world-openness, as the ways in which beings come forth and compose the concreteness of an individual's life. His understanding is founded by the occurrence of human being and not by an analysis of 'person' or 'self'. And while his therapeutic method is psychoanalytic, he has utilized an understanding of human being that obviates the subjectivistic, volitionally oriented psychoanalytic theories of consciousness and unconsciousness, which lead

inevitably to viewing man as an encapsulated event contained by an external world. One of the differences this emphasis makes therapeutically is that nonconceptual opening to one's openness in the world – compare the above discussion of Heidegger's understanding of truth and freedom – receives much more stress than rational acknowledgment and appropriation of previously unrecognized psychological characteristics.

The meaning of these claims is that being well and ill is a way of *being* and that human being is the source for an adequate understanding of human health. Anything short of an understanding of the openness of man with the disclosures of beings, i.e., of perceptive world-openness, promises to reflect a pathology of human thought in which the theoretician has not yet fulfilled the possibilities of his own temporal, immediate awareness which grounds his interpretations. In such a case, the equally dangerous madness of ignorance in the guise of intelligence will dominate, a domination in which the person repeatedly falls prey to his own interpretive creations and suffers, as a result, a *closure* from the world in the way he makes his interpretations of the world. *Madness* then reflects us to ourselves and fulfills the Socratic function of teaching us something about the ignorance of our best enlightenment.

## Notes

1 In this discussion, the way beings are, how they come forth in their particularity, is one major point of focus. The difficulty of expression centers on how to elaborate 'beings' and not to imply objects of subjective action or surd-like things that are taken to be nondisclosed, but somehow present. How, in a word, are we to understand beings as claiming events? I have used the phrase 'disclosiveness of beings' and occasionally 'openness of beings' in order to elaborate 'claim'. Neither Heidegger nor Boss nor Binswanger uses the word *openness* to apply to nonhuman beings, although Heidegger places emphasis on the 'unhiddenness' of beings in *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*. Heidegger and Boss reserve the specific word *openness* for reference to *Dasein*. *Dasein* is a realm of openness that allows the entrance, the forthcoming of beings. But beings happen fundamentally as meaningful availabilities, as particular and meaningful possibilities for specific reference, amalgamation, and appropriation. The '*openness* of beings' underscores their being given as *available* in the allowance of *Dasein* for further disclosures. They are not subjective events that do something we call self-showing. They are given *possibilities* for specific reference which have intrinsic and immediate reference to the allowing openness of *Dasein*. As such they are open, i.e., they are the concrete and particular ways in which *Dasein* is world-related and specifically open to what has gone before and is up-coming. When Heidegger says that 'the posture [or comportment: *Verhalten*] of man is pervasively tuned by the openness of the being in the whole' (*Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*, p. 18), he may be taken to mean in the context of the statement that man is temporally open in the ways things come forth. Beings are how man is particularly and temporally open. If beings, as unhidden, are not understood as opennesses in the openness of *Dasein*, the immediacy of the ontic (this particular way of being

open) and the ontological (the openness of *Dasein*) in human existence will be prone to be compromised and the historical meaning of beings will be more difficult to understand.

2 To develop this term adequately one would need also to deal with the full ontological structure of *Dasein*, with which perceptive world-openness is synonymous. That is too extensive a task for this discussion.

3 A being immediately constitutes or composes a particular human existence. Heidegger says in *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* (p. 11) that 'jeder Offenständige Bezug ist Verhalten'. The 'Offenständigkeit' of man is ontically differentiated according to the different ways the *Verhalten* occur. As beings are allowed to come forth, one stands open in various *Verhalten* or postures. So we may say that a being makes a difference in how it enters in or occurs in the *Bezirk* of *Dasein*. How it happens is a particular ontic event and its making a difference is its claim. A being, as claim, composes a particular aspect of a person's existence.

4 'Existential analysis school of thought', *Existence*, ed. by R. May, Basic Books, p. 197.

5 *ibid.*, p. 193.

6 *ibid.*, p. 194.

7 *ibid.*

8 *Being-In-the-World* (Harper, 1963), p. 212.

9 *Existence*, p. 198.

10 *ibid.*, p. 197.

11 *ibid.*, p. 194.

12 *ibid.*, p. 198.

13 *Being-In-the-World*, p. 201.

14 *ibid.*, pp. 251-2.

15 *ibid.*, p. 254.

16 *Existence*, p. 194.

17 *Being-In-the-World*, p. 207.

18 *ibid.*

19 Continuity is found, not in steady *a priori* structures, but in the finite claiming and answering event of man, when 'answering and claiming' are understood as historical and linguistic in nature. I believe that this concept of continuity is best explicated by Gadamer's analysis of tradition and language in *Wahrheit und Methode*, in which he shows that continuity occurs as an historical event of transmission. His description is helpfully confirmed in instances of psychotic breakdown in which one's linkage with the past is thoroughly interrupted and the person loses the threads of meaningful continuity. On this understanding, the psychotic interruption is to be understood as an injury of the temporality of occurrences, not as a 'sealing off' of *a priori* categories.

20 Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes and references in this section are taken from *Grundriss der Medizin*, Hans Huber, 1971, Part III, Chap. II, Section d, pp. 483-511. In the direct quotes I have used an unpublished translation of this section by Dr. Brian Kenny. This book was written in close association with Heidegger and reflects some twenty-five years of conversations and jointly taught seminars by Boss and Heidegger.

21 By contrast, note the following statement by an Indian sage to Boss: 'But how should a person who does not trust his own basis and does not dare yield to it have the calmness and strength to give aid to others who need it? . . . [I am speaking of] the primordial trust in what is inconceivable by conceptual understanding, incalculable by all calculations, in which all things are rooted.

Even though all this is still a deeply veiled mystery to you, it will one day dawn on your intellect as that great beginning which, though incalculable, is never just the contrary of a calculable order, merely chaos, but is always what sustains all chaos and order together.' *A Psychiatrist Discovers India* (London: Oswald Wolff: 1965), p. 190.

22 *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*, Klostermann, third ed., 1954.

23 Emphasis mine.

24 Transcendental subjectivity is not, for him, synonymous with the Unconscious, but the model of sickness as tension is nonetheless a fundamental characteristic of his thought, and conscious-unconscious tensions are a part of his larger scheme. 'Needless to say, I have never managed without the Unconscious: either in psychotherapeutic practice, which indeed is impossible without using Freud's concept of the Unconscious, or in "theory."' But after I turned to phenomenology and existential analysis, I conceived the Unconscious in a different way. The problem it presented became broader and deeper, as it became less and less defined as merely the opposite of the "conscious", whereas in psychoanalysis it is still seen largely in terms of simple opposition. Heidegger's existential analysis, as contrasted with Sartre, taken as its point of departure not consciousness, but existence as conceived as being-in-the-world; accordingly the opposition in question recedes into the background in favor of a description of the various phenomenologically demonstrable modes and structures of being-in-the-world.' L. Binswanger, *Sigmund Freud: Reminiscences of a Friendship* (Grune and Stratton, 1957), p. 64.

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## Heidegger, the possible and God

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Richard Kearney

In the introduction to *Being and Time* (1927), Martin Heidegger announces his project of 'overcoming' metaphysics. One of the most salient features of this overcoming (*Überwindung*) is the subversion of the traditional metaphysical priority of actuality over possibility. From the point of view of a post-metaphysical or phenomenological ontology – of which *Being and Time* is to be the first sample – the possible is considered 'higher' than the actual.<sup>1</sup> But what precisely does Heidegger mean by 'the possible' and to what extent can a re-interpretation of the traditional meaning of this term contribute to the task of overcoming metaphysics? This is the main question, hitherto much neglected by Heidegger's commentators, I propose to reflect on in this study. And, as a corollary, I wish to explore some of the implications of Heidegger's thinking on the possible for a critical re-thinking of the concept of the divine.

It must be remarked, at the outset, that 'the possible' is not an unequivocal notion in Heidegger's philosophy. His understanding of this term alters and develops in tandem with the overall movement of his thought. Thus, borrowing the celebrated distinction between Heidegger I and II (first outlined by W. J. Richardson in his *Heidegger* and approved by Heidegger himself in an introduction to this work) I would say that the 'turning' (*Kehre*) from the early to the later Heidegger, in the thirties and forties, is evinced in a parallel 'turn' in his understanding of the possible. I shall attempt, therefore, to analyse Heidegger's post-metaphysical comprehension of the possible on the basis of his distinction between: (a) the possible understood as a mode of human existence, *Dasein* (Heidegger I), and (b) the possible understood as a mode of Being itself, *Sein* (Heidegger II). The understanding of the possible in *Being and Time* – as *Möglichkeit/Seinkönnen/Ermöglichen* – will serve as representative of Heidegger I; the understanding of 'the possible' in the

*Letter on Humanism* (1945) – as *Vermögen* – will represent the thought of Heidegger II. It is on the basis of the latter that I will sketch out an alternative post-metaphysical conception of god as *posse*, in the second part of this study.

## Part I: Heidegger and the possible

The possible is one of the key – if largely overlooked – terms of the existential analysis of *Being and Time*. Heidegger's understanding of this term is threefold: (a) *Möglichkeit* (possibility); (b) *Seinkönnen* (potentiality-to-be); (c) *Ermöglichen* (to render possible). I will take each of these in turn.

(a) *Möglichkeit*/Possibility: in *Being and Time* Heidegger argues that human being is neither a worldless subject nor an object among others but a 'being in the world'. Phenomenologically considered, being is no longer reducible to a simple presence – whether this be the idealist notion of a subject present to itself, or the realist notion of an object given to us in its substantive presence. Heidegger maintains that phenomenology enables us to consider our being as a possibility rather than a simple actuality. He reveals that we are beings who exist beyond our present selves, always extending ourselves along ever expanding temporal horizons. We discover ourselves as beings in time, continually moving beyond the actual givens of the present towards the future and the past: those dimensions of ourselves which we possess only as absences, as *possibilities*. Phenomenology is therefore the first philosophy which permits us to 'overcome' the traditional hegemony of presence characteristic of all metaphysical systems. Thus, Heidegger founds his distinction between authentic and inauthentic existence on this primordial difference between presence and possibility.<sup>2</sup> More precisely, I am authentic when I understand my 'existence *qua* actuality' *on the basis* of my 'existence *qua* possibility' and not vice-versa.

This manner of understanding the being of human existence (*Da-Sein*) as possibility rather than presence goes against the whole metaphysical tradition. Aristotle accorded an absolute priority to act (*entelecheia*) over potency (*dunamis*).<sup>3</sup> Faithful to this priority classical metaphysics designated the Divine Being as a pure and eternal *actus* over and above all transitory and material *potentia*. Hence St Thomas' definition of God in the *Summa*: 'Deus est Actus purus, non habens aliquid de potentialitate.'<sup>4</sup> Even Leibniz who appeared to vindicate the possible in some measure, finished by reducing it to a mere represented *possibilitas* in the mind of a God perfectly actualized in His own Being.

By contrast, Heidegger sees the possible (*das Mögliche*) as the trans-

cidental horizon of *Dasein*. The possible is nothing less than that horizon of transcendence which makes possible both the individual historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) of each individual and the general history (*Geschichte*) of humankind. Historicity and history are grounded on a fundamental human experience of openness towards time. By time Heidegger understands here, in *Being and Time*, the temporal horizons which extend the present towards the possible worlds of past and future thus endowing it with meaning. Time is an 'ex-static' horizon of possibility into which I step when I step outside of (*ex-stasis*) my present existence, i.e. my existence considered as simple presence. Heidegger argues that traditional metaphysics treated the human subject solely in terms of the simple presence of its being (*Seiende*) and thereby ignored the very Being (*Sein*) of this being-present. This Being of being reveals itself as the non-present possibility of *Dasein*. Heidegger can thus conclude that Being-there (*Da-Sein*) is my existence as *possibility*.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast to classical metaphysics which, since Aristotle, viewed time as an addition of present movements, Heidegger proposes a 'fundamental' ontology which will reveal time as an horizon of possibilities which possibilizes and grounds (*gründen*) the present.<sup>6</sup> So doing, he will enable us to question the very Being of our being-present, that absence which grounds our presence and appears to us, phenomenologically, as possibility. By thus defining our 'fundamental' way of being-in-the-world (*in-der-Welt-sein*) as possibility, Heidegger intends to 'overcome' the standard metaphysical definitions of existence in terms of presence: *Ousia*, *Existentia*, *Substantia*, *Res Cogitans*, *Gegenstand*, *Gegenwärtigung*, *Vorhandenheit*, etc.<sup>7</sup>

But Heidegger does not suggest that human existence is only possibility. More exactly, he describes it as both actuality and possibility, stressing the fact that the latter is the site of the former. I am a being-there (*Da-sein*) who has been 'thrown' into existence and who can do nothing to alter this 'fact'. But the very 'meaning' (*Bedeutung*) of my thrownness (*Geworfenheit*) and facticity (*Faktizität*) as a being who *actually* exists, can only be comprehended from the more fundamental perspective of possibility. My comprehension of myself as 'thrown' (*geworfen*) into this actual world is only meaningful on the basis of my understanding of myself as a being who is always 'projected' (*ent-werfen*) towards the world as possibility. But we must not misunderstand this to mean that we inhabit two worlds. There is only one world which, like *Dasein*, is both actual and possible, both present and future. The possible is the horizon of the world; and the world is the horizon of *Dasein*. Possibility is that world-horizon towards which (*Woraufhin*) I direct myself in that temporalizing transcendence which alone gives meaning to our actual world.<sup>8</sup>

But if Heidegger maintains that an understanding of our existence as

'possibility' is the very meaning and ground of our actual existence, he does not deny that such an understanding may sometimes be inauthentic. Possibility is inauthentic when it is apprehended as a state of objectifiable givenness (*Seiende als Vorhandenheit*) rather than of the 'Being' of our being-present. All 'logical', 'factual', 'existentiell' or 'ontical' possibilities as outlined by Heidegger in *Being and Time* are inauthentic in so far as they construe the possible on the basis of 'presence', thereby masking its *authentic* role as the basis of 'presence'.<sup>9</sup> Authenticity is used here as an ontological rather than a moral term. In short, possibility is authentic when it is understood as an expression of the *Sein* of our existence and inauthentic when it is understood as an expression of our existence as *Seiende*, i.e. as an entity of ontic givenness.<sup>10</sup>

But Heidegger goes further. He states that our inauthentic possibilities only have 'meaning' to the extent that they are recognized as ultimately 'grounded' in our authentic (*eigentlich*) possibilities, i.e. those possibilities which are acknowledged as the ownmost (*eigenst*) modalities of our being-in-the world.

I begin to exist authentically as soon as I cease to experience my life, and my life-world, as given actualities of presence and unveil that horizon of possibilities which is the hidden significance of this presence. The horizon of the possible is always covered over by the anonymous crowd (*das Man*) which reduces life to the uniform, compelling the past and future to conform to the one form of an insular present. The Crowd hides the possible because it threatens to expose the mediocrity and inertia of our daily life. The Crowd protects its subscribers from the responsibility of having to choose their actual manner of existence from a host of possibilities. It isolates the present from the unsettling dimensions of past and future. It assures us that all that is is well and could not be otherwise. The discovery of the possible, which alone renders our lives authentic, shatters this myth of anonymous presence and compels each individual to face up to his/her responsibility. The disclosure of the horizon of possibility which grounds our actual existence makes us respond to the past which made us and the future which calls us. This disclosure fills us with anguish (*Angst*): we realize that our sovereign limiting possibility is the possibility of death.

Death is our ultimate possibility. It is the fundamental project which founds all other projects. Thus Heidegger concludes that the horizon of our world – be it the *Umwelt* of serviceable and referential objects (*Dienlichkeit* and *Verweisungsganzkeit*) or the *Mitwelt* of interrelating subjects (*Miteinandersein*) – is finite. The temporal horizon of our existence is a transcendental horizon which leads from our present to our open future of possibilities. But the openness of the future is not infinite; it terminates in death, the end of all our possibilities. Heidegger defines us as temporalizing beings always transcending the reality of the present



towards the possibility of the future, and ultimately towards our most future possibility, death. Death is the possibility which it is impossible to go beyond. I am free to the extent that I experience my life as possibility; I am only authentically free, however, when I experience my death as my ultimate possibility, the impossibility of further possibility, the end of my time.

To acknowledge death as the supreme project of my existence is to discover that the world is always *mine* in so far as it is an horizon of possibilities limited by *my* death. Death represents the finitude of *my* temporalization; it cannot belong to another. In order to live our life, as a 'being towards death', authentically we must live it as our *own*, as individuals over and against the collective 'they'. In thus authentically experiencing death as *my* supreme possibility, I experience the possibility of the impossibility (*Unmöglichkeit*) of my existence, the possibility of being-no-longer-able-to-be (*das Möglichkeit der Nicht-mehr-Dasein-könnens*).<sup>11</sup> Death is the end (*Umwillen/Umzu*) of all our possibilities. I exist authentically when I live my possibilities *towards* my death.

It seems clear, then, that the Heideggerian notion of the possible as *Möglichkeit* cannot be understood metaphysically as either the represented *possibilities* nor the immanent *potentia* of some being considered as 'presence'. *Möglichkeit* for Heidegger in *Being and Time* is the horizon of *Dasein* which transcends all actual presence. It represents a post-metaphysical understanding of the possible which shatters the notion of being as a solid and substantial self-presence exposing it to the temporalizing projects of *Dasein*. I am a being who is always transcending my being as presence towards my being as possibility, because I am a being who exists in time. Metaphysics hid the truth of being in hiding this fundamental rapport between being and time.

(b) *Seinkönnen*: In addition to *Möglichkeit*, Heidegger employs two other key terms in *Being and Time* to express his understanding of the possible. *Seinkönnen*, translated by Macquarrie and Robinson as 'potentiality-for-being'; and *Ermöglichen* or the power of rendering possible, of possibilizing.

Potentiality-for-being (*Seinkönnen*) signifies *Dasein*'s ability to project in the first place. It is the *sine qua non* of every projection of possibility. And every projection is a projection of the possible to the extent that it is a surpassing of the present. We can only project ourselves towards our possibilities because we have the potentiality to do so, i.e. to *be* our possibilities. *Seinkönnen* means that it is possible to reach out towards the possible. To say, as Heidegger does, that *Dasein* exists as possibility is to presuppose that *Dasein* *can* project its possibilities, *can* exist as potentiality-for-being. To be able to project that which is able to be I must first be a being who is able to be.<sup>12</sup> More exactly, all our projection,

comprehension or realization of possibilities issues from our *potentiality-to-be* projection, comprehension or realization.

*Seinkönnen*, like *Möglichkeit*, may be either authentic or inauthentic, ontical, factual or existentiell.<sup>13</sup> Whereas, for example, *Möglichkeiten* can refer to both the 'possibilities' of *things* (i.e. cultural, technical, linguistic or perceptual objects) and of *human existence*, *Seinkönnen* is attributable to human existence alone.<sup>14</sup> If *Möglichkeiten* are the projects of *Dasein*, *Seinkönnen* is *Dasein*'s prerequisite power of projection. Similarly, if the former are extended along the temporal horizon of *Dasein*, the latter is *Dasein*'s very capacity to temporalize this horizon. Thus, while the 'possibilities' of *Dasein* may be said to be variable, its potentiality-to-be is constant. We may, for example, consciously project many possibilities which we simply don't have the potentiality-to-be, the possibility of being a bird or a god. And contrariwise, even though we are invariably potentiality-for-being-towards-death we are not always projectively aware of this as our most sovereign possibility. It is on the basis of this distinction between two modes of living the possible, that Heidegger speaks of a conscience (*Gewissen*) which calls each one of us to choose, from amidst the multiple possibilities of his/her horizon, the singularly authentic possibility of acknowledging oneself as a potentiality-for-being-towards-death.<sup>15</sup> As Heidegger puts it: 'Being-towards-death is the anticipation of a potentiality-for-being of that entity (i.e. man) whose kind of Being is anticipation itself. . . . Death is *Dasein*'s *ownmost* possibility [*Möglichkeit*]; and being towards this possibility discloses to *Dasein* its *ownmost* potentiality-for-being [*Seinkönnen eigenst*].'<sup>16</sup>

Death is the limit of the possible both as our *ownmost* possibility and *ownmost* potentiality-for-being. But death limits us in different ways. As the limit of possibility it is that 'towards which' *Dasein* projects itself; as the limit of potentiality-for-being it is that 'for which' *Dasein* projects itself. To apprehend death as our sovereign possibility is to recognize *Dasein* as our potentiality-for-Being-in-its-totality (*Ganzseinkönnen*). This apprehension of our Being in the totality of its possibility presupposes that we recognize ourselves as temporal ekstases stretched between past and future. To recognize our *Ganzseinkönnen* thus is to gainsay the prefabricated opinions of the Crowd (*das Man*) which reduce us to a part of ourselves in reducing us to what we are exclusively now in the present, or to the illusion of a permanent undying 'presence'.<sup>17</sup> To recognize our *Ganzseinkönnen* is to simultaneously recognize our *Selbstseinkönnen*, that potentiality-for-being-one's-self denied us by the Crowd.<sup>18</sup> All the other potentialities-for-being, i.e. the potentiality to be someone who works, speaks, feels anguished, guilty or at issue, are ultimately derivative of our *ownmost* potentiality-for-being-towards-death which is at once our *Ganzseinkönnen* and our *Selbstseinkönnen*. Death is the potentiality-to-be one's whole self which in turn totalizes and individual-

izes all other *Seinkönnen*.<sup>19</sup> Heidegger concludes accordingly: 'The certain possibility of death discloses Dasein as a possibility, but does so only in such a way that, in anticipating this possibility, Dasein possibilizes [*ermöglicht*] this possibility [*Möglichen*] for itself as its ownmost potentiality-for-being [*Seinkönnen*].'<sup>20</sup>

(c) *Ermöglichen*: This last quotation underlines the difference between *Möglichkeit*, *Seinkönnen* and the third key term for the possible in *Being and Time* – *ermöglichen*. In this and other passages, the verb *ermöglichen*, meaning to 'make or render possible' is used to designate the most fundamental existential activity of *Dasein*, that is, the activity by which it deploys itself as a potentiality-for-being which projects its own possibilities of existence.

However, at several junctures during the concluding chapters of *Being and Time*, Heidegger seems to suggest that the subject of the verb *ermöglichen* may be other than *Dasein* itself. This enigmatic switch of subject is scarcely perceptible but is, none the less, of profound importance for the subsequent development of Heidegger's thought. In section 65, for example, Heidegger defines the 'meaning' (*Sinn*) of *Dasein* as 'that onto which' (*Woraufhin*) *Dasein* projects itself, a *Woraufhin* which for its part 'renders possible' (*ermöglicht*) all of *Dasein*'s projects. I cite in German, as this twofold meaning is lost in translation: '*Das Woraufhin eines Entwurfs freilegen, besagt, das erschliessen, was das Entworfenene ermöglicht.*'<sup>21</sup> This sentence is ambivalent in that *das Entworfenene* (that which is projected) may be understood as either the subject or the object of the verb *ermöglicht* (to 'render possible'). If it is *subject*, then the *woraufhin* (the 'that onto which' *Dasein* projects itself which in turn 'renders possible' this projection) is nothing other than the projection of *Dasein* itself. In this case, the 'rendering possible' of *Dasein* constitutes a self-projecting, solipsistic circle. If *das Entworfenene* is *object* of the sentence, however, then it would seem that the *Woraufhin* which 'renders possible' *Dasein*'s projection is something radically *other* than this projection itself. The ambiguity is, I submit, intentional.

Macquarrie and Robinson offer the following translation here: 'To lay bare the "upon-which" of a projection, amounts to disclosing that which makes possible what has been projected.' The translators' choice here of the second of the two possible meanings is in line with my suggestion that the general movement of Heidegger's treatment of the possible in *Being and Time* is progressively away from a metaphysical interpretation which would see the possible as a dimension (*potentia* or *possibilitas*) immanent in the being of things towards a post-metaphysical interpretation which recognizes possibility as a transcendent dimension, emerging from beyond things (*Seiendes*), from that Being (*Sein*) which renders

things possible in the first place. The sentences which follow Heidegger's enigmatic phrase appear to confirm this reading:

What has been projected is the Being of Dasein, and it is disclosed in what constitutes that Being as an authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole. That upon which [*Woraufhin*] the Being which has been disclosed and is thus constituted has been projected is that which makes possible this constitution of Being as care.<sup>22</sup>

In section 71, we find an equally puzzling and ambivalent passage in which Heidegger suggests that the fact that 'temporality . . . is rendered possible by the "*Being*" of Dasein [*die Zeitlichkeit . . . das Sein des Daseins ermöglicht*]' can only be genuinely understood on the basis of an understanding of the meaning of Being in general [*Sinn des Seins überhaupt*].<sup>23</sup> Is there not here the suggestion that the '*Being* of Dasein' (*Being* underlined by Heidegger himself) which 'renders possible' temporality, refers ultimately to 'Being in general' which, as we know from Heidegger's later writings, is fundamentally 'different' from *Dasein* itself? As Heidegger puts it elsewhere, 'whereas Being in general may be [*weset*] without Dasein, Dasein may never be without Being'.<sup>24</sup>

Heidegger corroborates this suggestion in section 76, when he makes mention of 'the quiet power of the possible' (*die stille Krafte des Möglichen*) which 'renders possible' both our history and our comprehension of history.<sup>25</sup> He goes on to identify this 'quiet power of the possible' with the futural 'towards-which' of all our temporal projections. Moreover, in the concluding sentences of *Being and Time*, this circular manner of referring possibility to temporality and temporality to possibility reconfirms our hypothesis that it is ultimately Being itself which 'renders possible' the projections of *Dasein*:

The existential-ontological constitution of Dasein's totality is grounded in temporality. Hence the ecstatic projection of Being must be made possible [*ermöglicht*] by some primordial way in which ecstatic temporality temporalizes. How is this mode of the temporalizing of temporality to be interpreted? Is there a way which leads from primordial *time* to the meaning of *Being*? Does *time* itself manifest itself as the horizon of Being?<sup>26</sup>

The final suggestion would seem to be that it is Being which 'renders possible' (*ermöglicht*) time. Or more exactly, it is Being itself which 'renders possible' the temporality of *Dasein* as a potentiality-for-being which projects its own possibilities. But within the compass of *Being and Time* this reading remains no more than a suggestion; the overall perspec-

tive of the possible in this work appears to be based more on *Dasein* – on the Being of *human* existence – than on Being itself (*Sein als Sein*).

To summarize this analysis of the possible in *Being and Time*, we might say that just as our understanding of *Möglichkeit* referred us to an understanding of *Seinkönnen*, so in turn our understanding of *Seinkönnen* led to an understanding of *ermöglichen*. This movement from a nominal to a verbal notion of the possible, reflects in some fashion the progressive movement in Heidegger's thought away from being as a being-present (*Seiende als Anwesenheit*) who lives its possibilities only secondarily and accidentally, towards being as a Being-there (*Da-Sein*) whose temporalizing 'renders possible' and, more remarkable still, is 'rendered possible' by it. Heidegger himself does not at any time explicitly allude to this terminological progression. But as I hope to have shown he does not have to – the text speaks for itself. The important point is that with his original analysis of the possible in *Being and Time*, Heidegger has already taken the decisive step beyond a metaphysics of presence.

Before concluding this first part of our analysis some brief reference must be made to Heidegger's allusions to 'the possible' in two other works written before the 'turning' (*Kehre*) of his thought. In *Nietzsches Wort: 'Gott ist Tod'* (a resumé of lectures given between 1936 and 1940), there is a curious passage where Heidegger observes that for Nietzsche 'the essence of art is the creation of *possibilities* for the will, on the basis of which the will to power liberates itself for itself for the first time'.<sup>27</sup> Art reveals the essence of all willing to be a perpetual self-creation which goes beyond our given nature by appropriating other 'possible' experiences. A propos of this reading Heidegger cites the following sentence from Nietzsche's *Will to Power* (aph.796): 'The world like a work of art gives birth to itself.' Art is, as Heidegger comments, primarily a *value* for Nietzsche, the willing of *more* power: 'A perspectival direction towards possibilities . . . which are given only through a penetrating forward look that belongs to the essence of the will to power.'<sup>28</sup> It seems that here, as in *Being and Time*, Heidegger interprets the notion of possibility as an horizontal projection of the Being of one human being, that is, of *Dasein*. The work of art constitutes a world of the possible. It unfolds as an horizon of valorizing human projection. Thus we recognize that just as the 'worldhood of the world' in chapter 3 of *Being and Time* was understood on the basis of 'readiness-to-hand' (*Zuhandenheit* as the totality of the referential valorization, *Verweisung*, and orientation, *Ausrichtung*, of *Dasein*'s projects), so also art as conceived by Nietzsche is a world of unfettered human valorizing. In short, in art the 'meaning' of the will to power is revealed as a valorizing projection of human being towards the possible.

It is in a similar perspective that Heidegger interprets the notion of possibility in part three of *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (1929).<sup>29</sup> Here Heidegger defines possibility as the auto-affective horizon of human temporality grounded in the 'transcendental imagination'. With Kant the possible emerges, for the first time in the history of metaphysics, as the field of temporality. The possible is the temporal horizon of human imagination which renders possible the unity of understanding and sensibility.<sup>30</sup> For Kant in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as for Heidegger in *Being and Time*, the possible is that anticipative-projective structure (*Vor-haben*, *Vor-stellung*, *Vor-bildung*) which grounds human temporality. Thus when Kant says that the human self is a being who temporalizes by 'imaginatively' transcending the present towards the possible (i.e. non-present horizon of the past and future), he is anticipating Heidegger's claim in *Being and Time* that *Dasein* gives itself a world by projecting itself temporally toward a transcendental horizon of possibility. Heidegger fully acknowledges, moreover, that Kant's insight into the temporalizing nature of the transcendental imagination was the precursor to his own understanding of *Dasein*.<sup>31</sup> Indeed Kant's attempt to think being in terms of time, and presence in terms of possibility, was one of the earliest challenges to the traditional metaphysical claim that Being be understood as 'presence' rather than temporality. But as Heidegger goes to great lengths to point out, Kant was so disturbed by the implications of this challenge that he suppressed his analysis of imagination as the temporalizing pass-over from presence to possibility in the second edition of the *Critique*.<sup>32</sup> Not until the publication of *Being and Time* some 140 years later would this omission be redressed. We must bear in mind, nonetheless, that we are dealing here with Heidegger's *interpretation* of Kant's theory of imagination (as of Nietzsche's theory of will) rather than with the original theory itself.<sup>33</sup>

In the two works cited, therefore, Heidegger's analysis of the possible shows itself to be perfectly consistent with his novel definition of this term in *Being and Time* as a temporalizing-projecting-valorizing horizon of *Dasein*. Heidegger I (Heidegger before the 'turning') thus leads us to think the being of the world less as a permanent substance or subsistence and more as *Dasein*'s transcendental horizon of possibility. But even if Heidegger I raises our understanding of Being from presence (*Vorhandenheit*) to possibility (*Möglichkeit*), he does so largely within the limits of transcendental subjectivity. In short, his analysis of the possible emerges from his original (i.e. post-metaphysical) disclosure of the Being of *Dasein* as temporality, rather than from an even more fundamental disclosure of Being as Being (*Sein als Sein*). This second disclosure was to be the prerogative of Heidegger II.

In the forties there occurred the famous 'turning' (*Kehre*) in Heidegger's

thought. This 'turning' is clearly manifest in his approach to the notion of the possible. Now the possible is thought in terms of Being itself rather than in terms of the Being of *Dasein* or a transcendental subject. As Heidegger makes quite clear in his introduction to Richardson's commentary, however, there is no question here of a philosophical *volte-face*. The thought of Heidegger II is to be understood as a deepening of, rather than a deviation from, Heidegger I. The two say the same thing but from different perspectives. The possible which is thought about in both instances remains the same, the only difference being that in Heidegger II it is approached from the perspective of Being as Being rather than Being as being-there. This point will become clearer when we show how the later Heidegger's interpretation of the possible as *Vermögen* already exists in germinal form in the early Heidegger's notion of *ermöglichen*.

The 'turning' in Heidegger's thought on the possible is best expressed, I believe, in the following key passage from *Eine Brief Über den Humanismus* (1947).

Being as the element is the 'quiet power' of the loving potency [*Vermögens*], i.e. of the possible [*des Möglichen*]. Our words 'possible' and 'possibility' are, under the domination of 'logic' and 'metaphysics', taken only in contrast to 'actuality', i.e. they are conceived with reference to a determined – viz. the metaphysical – interpretation of Being as *actus* and *potentia*, the distinction of which is identified with that of *existentia* and *essentia*. When I speak of the 'quiet power of the possible', I do not mean the possible of a merely represented *possibilitas*, nor the *potentia* as *essentia* of an *actus* of the *existentia*, but Being itself, which in its loving potency [*das Mögend*] possibilizes [*vermag*] thought and thus also the essence of man, which means in turn his relationship to Being. To possibilize [*vermögen*] something is to sustain it in its essence, to retain it in its element.<sup>34</sup>

The first thing to be remarked here is that the repetition of the portentous phrase from *Being and Time* (i.e. 'the quiet power of the possible'), in hyphenated form, signals Heidegger's intention to rehearse and develop its original meaning. As we observed in our analysis of the term *ermöglichen* in *Being and Time*, the notion of 'possibilizing' was frequently used ambiguously to refer to either of two different subjects – Being as human being (*Dasein*) or Being as Being (*Sein als Sein*).<sup>35</sup> Here in the *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger replaces *ermöglichen* by *vermögen* thereby unambiguously identifying the fundamental power of possibilizing with Being itself.

Whereas *ermöglichen* could be either authentic or inauthentic, *vermögen* is always authentic. To put it in another way: *vermögen* (which I

translate as 'possibilization' or 'possibilizing' since the author uses it as both verb and noun) is to be correctly understood as the exclusively authentic essence of *ermöglichen* (to render possible). It is *ermöglichen* viewed from the point of view of Being in general (*Sein überhaupt*) rather than of human being in particular. As Heidegger explains:

It is on the strength of this loving potency or possibilization of love [*Das Vermögen des Mögens*], that something is possibilized [*vermag*] in its authentic [*eigentlich*] being. This possibilization [*Vermögen*] is the authentic 'possible' [*das eigentlich 'mögliche'*], that whose essence rests on loving [*Mögen*].<sup>36</sup>

'Possibilization' (*Vermögen*) is thus identified with Being itself to the extent that it possibilizes what is most proper (*eigenst*) and authentic (*eigentlich*) for human being, i.e. thought. Correlatively, thought is that which cares for Being, shows care (*Sorge*) for what is most proper (*eigenst*) to it. Heidegger exploits here the hidden resources of the term *Vermögen*, notably its root, *mögen*, meaning 'to love'. To care for Being is consequently to love it in taking care of its essence as it manifests itself in all things: 'Thought is . . . to concern oneself about the essence of a "thing" or a "person", that means to like or to love them.'<sup>37</sup> Possibilization is, quite simply, the love of Being; and love of Being is to be understood as both a subjective and objective genitive, that is, both as *Dasein's* love for Being and Being's love for *Dasein* which possibilizes (*vermag*) *Dasein's* loving – thinking – in the first place.

Thus we may say that thinking is *Dasein's* most proper and authentic possibility (*eigenst und eigentlich Möglich*). Thinking is that which is possibilized by the 'loving possibilization' of Being itself so that it may, in turn, lovingly possibilize the coming to be (*wesen*) of all beings. Being possibilizes thought which in turn possibilizes the Being of things. This ontological reciprocity is ingeniously captured by the untranslatable accusative/nominative duplexity of the German *das*: '*Aus diesem Mögen vermag das Sein das Denken.*' Lohner's translation of this sentence as 'Being is capable of thought' is incorrect because it is one-sided. For it is not merely a question of Being being capable of thought, but also of Being making thought capable of Being, i.e. of thinking Being. Within a space of ten lines Lohner uses three different terms to translate *vermögen* ('potency', 'to be capable of', and to 'command'); and without the slightest indication to the reader that we are in all cases concerned with the *same* term. Our alternative rendition of *vermögen* as 'possibilizing' (meaning both 'to possibilize/possibilization') seeks to capture its complex double role as noun and verb. Accordingly, we render the German '*Aus diesem mögen vermag das Sein das Denken*' as 'Being possibilizes thought which possibilizes Being'. This version is confirmed, it seems to me, in



the sentences which immediately follow: '*Jenes ermöglicht dieses. Das Sein als das Vermögend-Mögende ist das "Mög-liche"*' – 'The one renders the other possible. Being as the loving-possibilizing is the "*posse-ible*"'.

There are three crucial points to be made about this telling statement (the entire second sentence of which Lohner omits to translate!). The first is that the juxtaposing here of *ermöglichen* (Heidegger I's term for the possible in *Being and Time*) with *Vermögen* (Heidegger II's word for the possible) shows how both terms refer to the *same* truth of the possible without denying the difference of their respective perspectives (that is, *ermöglichen* as the possible seen from the perspective of *Dasein*, *Vermögen* as the possible seen from the perspective of Being). In this movement from the *ermöglichen* of Heidegger I to the *Vermögen* of Heidegger II the ambiguity which we remarked above is shown to be – in its essence (i.e. from the point of view of Being as Being) – the very truth of Being itself as a reciprocity of loving and thinking.

The second point concerns the use of the term '*Vermögend-Mögende*' to describe Being. This particular grammatical usage means that Being is at one and the same time a possibilizing and a loving: it loves because it possibilizes and possibilizes because it loves.

Third, the direct equation of Being with '*das Mög-liche*' shows that the root of both loving (*Mögend*) and possibilizing (*Vermögend*) is the same, namely, *Mög*. It is impossible to render this two-in-one meaning of *Mög-liche* in English. But by translating '*Mög-liche*' as '*posse-ible*' we hope at least to have communicated one of the fundamental meanings, that is, Being as *posse*: to be possible, being-possible, possibilizing. Whatever about the impossibility of an adequate or elegant translation, however, it is abundantly clear that Lohner's omission of this pivotal sentence makes Heidegger's revolutionary identification of Being as *Vermögen* incomprehensible to the English reader.

In this cardinal yet much neglected passage from *The Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger goes so far as to describe Being itself as a 'loving possibilization' (*Mögende Vermögen*). In so doing he reveals the implicit truth of the three preceding notions of the possible – i.e. possibility (*Möglichkeit*), potentiality-for-being (*Seinkönnen*), and making possible (*ermöglichen*) – to be nothing less than the possibilizing (*Vermögen*) of Being itself.

Possibilizing is Being itself to the extent that it possibilizes (*vermag*) beings out of love for their essence. But there is another more literal meaning to the term *Vermögen* which might be immediately obvious to the German reader and which cannot be ignored in this context. Curious as it may seem, the current meaning of *Vermögen* is 'power' or 'property'. Used as a verb it can signify to have power or influence on persons or things. Though this alternative meaning of *Vermögen* appears in stark contrast to Heidegger's etymological rendition as a 'loving possibilizing', it is by no means accidental. Several critics, notably Emmanuel Lévinas

and Martin Buber, have attacked Heidegger's notion of Being as an anonymous Totality which reduces beings to the measure of its self-identical power.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, one of Lohner's three alternative translations for *Vermögen* was, as we noted, 'to command'. (His version runs as follows: 'When I speak of the "quiet power" [*kraft*] of the "possible" [I mean]. . . . Being itself, which in its loving potency [*Vermögen*] commands [*vermag*] thought and thus also the essence of man, which means in turn his relationship to Being.') Heidegger's hyphenated singularization of the term *Kraft*, meaning 'force', as a virtual synonym of *Vermögen* could be seen as further endorsing the 'power' signification of this term. It is not my intention, however, to assess the validity of the interpretation of Being as 'power'. Suffice it to say that the identification of Being with *Vermögen* can mean that Being is either a 'loving-possibilizing' or a 'power' which appropriates and commands, or even both at once. Indeed, it is just such an identity of Being as *both* 'possibility' and 'power' – which appropriates (*ereignen*) that which is most appropriate (*eignet*) and authentically proper (*eigentlich eigenst*) to beings – which emerges in Heidegger II's ultimate term for Being: *das Er-eignis*. *Vermögen* and *Ereignis* may both be translated as 'appropriation'.<sup>39</sup>

In 'Time and being' (the projected third part of *Being and Time* which was rethought by Heidegger II and withheld from publication until 1969), the author renders the enigmatic '*esti gar einai*' of Parmenides as 'the possibility of Being'.<sup>40</sup> The *esti* here must, Heidegger states, be understood as the *es Gibt*, the giving of Being. The giving of Being is also, identically and simultaneously, a giving of time; and is not therefore to be confused with the metaphysical notion of Being as permanent presence. This reaffirmation of the identity of Being and time in this crucial late text shows how Heidegger II remains in direct continuity with Heidegger I's initial exhortation in *Being and Time* to think Being in terms of temporality which absences (into future and past) even as it presences (in the actual moment) rather than a metaphysics of simple substantified presence.<sup>41</sup> As the giving of Being, *esti* is to be understood as that which 'is capable of Being' – the 'power' or 'possibility' of Being. The French translation here as *pouvoir-être* captures this double sense with felicitous ease. Being is thus identified as the 'possibility of Being' in the sense of 'that which *can be*'. And it is this very designation of Being as 'possibility of Being' which leads directly to Heidegger's celebrated definition of Being as *Ereignis* in this same work.

In a closely related text, 'The end of philosophy', Heidegger affirms that 'the end of philosophy is the place in which the whole of philosophy's history is gathered in its most ultimate possibility'.<sup>42</sup> And he goes on to suggest that this 'ultimate possibility' is also the 'first possibility' from which all genuine thought originates. It is, in other words, an eschatological possibility which holds sway beyond *Dasein*'s power of determination,

'a possibility whose contour remains obscure, whose coming remains uncertain'.<sup>43</sup> It would seem that this 'ultimate possibility' is nothing other than the *Ereignis* of Being itself, the 'appropriation' of thought by Being whose final coming remains beyond our choice or control. Is this not what Heidegger is thinking of in the *Der Spiegel* interview when he declares that 'Only a god can save us now'?

### Conclusion

Heidegger's complex thinking on the 'possible' represents a radical departure from traditional metaphysical theories on the subject. Whereas such theories tended to regard the 'possible' as a lack of presence or a mental re-presentation of presence, Heidegger proclaims it to be that which gives – i.e. possibilizes – all presence. No longer considered merely as a representational *possibilitas* of the subjective mind, or a *potentia* of objective reality, the possible (*das Möglich*) emerges as a 'loving power' which possibilizes all presence, be it represented or real. The possible, in short, is Being itself in so far as it gives and appropriates.

Whereas this identification of Being and the possible remains implicit in Heidegger I – where it is understood primarily in terms of the temporal horizon of human existence (i.e. as that 'onto which' *Dasein* projects itself in giving itself a world) – in Heidegger II the identification is clear and explicit. The 'turn' in Heidegger's thinking on the possible takes place, as we saw, in his *Letter on Humanism*. But more important perhaps than the internal development of Heidegger's thought on the possible is the degree to which his thought as a whole fulfils the programme of 'overcoming' metaphysics. This fulfilment is witnessed to a lesser degree in Heidegger I's threefold treatment of the 'possible' (*Möglichkeit*, *Seinkönnen* and *ermöglichen*) than in Heidegger II's identification of the possible with Being itself as *Vermögen* – and its cognates, *esti*, *es gibt* and *Ereignis*. But it is fair to say that in *both* Heideggers the 'possible' is thought of in a post-metaphysical fashion; that is, no longer as an accidental characteristic of the presence of beings, but rather as that temporality which is Being itself in its absencing-presencing, giving-withholding, loving-appropriating. May we not logically assume then that the task of overcoming metaphysics is nothing less than the task of thinking Being as possibility instead of simply as presence?

## Part II: Heidegger and God

In the final part of this study I will outline some of the implications of Heidegger's rethinking of the possible for an understanding of the question of God.

The history of Western metaphysics is, for Heidegger, the history of

onto-theology. It is, in other words, an *epoche* where being manifests itself as the highest divine entity (*theos*) or the most general grounding entity (*on*). The list of onto-theological formulations of being as substantified presence include: the Platonic concept of *eidos* as timeless and immutable oneness; the Aristotelian concept of *telos* as self-thinking thought; the Augustinian concept of divine being as self-loving love (*amor quo deus se ipsum amat*); the Thomistic/Scholastic concept of divine being as permanent subsistence (*ipsum esse subsistens*); the Cartesian and Spinozist concept of the *res cogitans* as a self-sufficient substance echoing the divine self-causing cause (*ens causa sui*); or the modern rationalist concepts of objectivity (*Gegenwärtigung*), representation (*Repräsentanz*) and presence (*Vorhandenheit*).

Heidegger's project of overcoming metaphysics poses a challenge, as we saw above, to the traditional onto-theological priority of actuality over possibility. The implications of this for an alternative – i.e. post-metaphysical – understanding of God are radical. At its most basic, it implies that God is no longer to be thought of as some atemporal, static *esse* but rather as a temporalizing, empowering *posse*.

The God of onto-theology was a God devoid of possibility. As *sumмум ens*, *ultima ratio* or *causa prima et essendi*, God was precisely that being which needed no other being to fulfil it. Thomas Aquinas was quite explicit on this decisive point, as we noted above, writing in the *Summa I*, paras Q.3–4 that '*deus est actus purus non habens aliquid de potentialitate*'. Heidegger's impassioned response to this God of ontotheology is significant. 'Before such a God', he affirms,

man cannot pray or offer a sacrifice. It is not possible for men to kneel, sing or dance before the *causa sui*. Indeed, a thinking which has abandoned the notion of God as *causa sui* is perhaps more faithful and more open to the truly divine God than onto-theological metaphysics would like to admit.<sup>44</sup>

Heidegger himself was reticent, for diverse reasons, to explore the possible consequences of the overcoming of the metaphysics of presence for a different thinking about God. His own reservations notwithstanding however, I shall briefly endeavour to suggest what some such consequences might entail. The post-metaphysical concept of God as *posse* I call the 'eschatological'.

First, it could be argued that the eschatological notion of *posse* better enables us to understand God according to the original scriptural notion of *kenosis*. Recalling Heidegger's own suggestive etymological linkage between the German terms *vermögen* (to possibilize) and *mögen* (to love), it would appear at least conceivable that the eschatological notion of God as possibilization approximates more accurately to the biblical

notion of divine *kenosis* (as self-emptying love) than to the ontological concept of a self-sufficient self-love. If divine love is that which grants the promise of a Kingdom to come, is it not more appropriate to interpret this love as *possibilizing* this Kingdom on earth – in giving itself to human beings as a possibility to be freely and creatively realized – rather than as a Kingdom already self-realized elsewhere irrespective of human freedom? Is the eschatological Kingdom not more true to its word as dialogical possibilization than as monological actualization? Indeed, is not such a view of things the only way to surmount the age-old onto-theological antinomy between divine omnipotence and human freedom? To understand God as *posse* – which I choose to render as *May-Be* – is to appreciate that we are entirely free to realize, or not to realize, the Kingdom possibilized by God. God's love is *kenosis* precisely because it is the gift of that which is most proper and precious to Christ – his life with the Father – in order to liberate his creatures by possibilizing a divine Kingdom in 'a new heaven and a new earth'.

Second, the eschatological interpretation of God as *posse* offers a way out of the traditional antinomy concerning the compatibility of God's goodness with the existence of evil. The historical scandal of theodicies and theocracies may be overcome if we acknowledge the *posse* as an ongoing dialogue between a divine love which possibilizes itself out of itself and a human *praxis* which strives to realize this possibilizing love. In this context, evil can now be understood as the consequence of the absence of such dialogue (in a revised form of the *privatio boni* argument). The evil in our world is not due to God but to us human beings to the extent that we refuse to realize the divine *posse* in our everyday existence. Evil results from our own unchecked expression of the will to dominate and possess (*libido dominandi*), from our closure to the gift of *other* possibilities of being from beyond ourselves. The eschatological God of the bible is not an Emperor of the World, as onto-theology proposed, but a 'voice crying in the wilderness', a voice which cannot be spoken until we hear it and speak for it.

Third, the eschatological concept of *posse* enables us to surmount another antinomy in the metaphysical understanding of God – namely, that he exists for himself and for others (*per se et per alio*) as a love of self and of others. Aristotle had no illusions about the onto-theological implications of the definition of God as Unmoved Mover. This meant that the Divine as pure actuality could motivate others to desire but could not itself desire others. The Divine *qua* self-thinking-thought is utterly without potentiality (*dunamis*) and so has no motivation in itself to seek actualization outside of itself. God is pure self-sufficient act. Anselm reiterates this onto-theological view when he defines God as *aseitas* – *a se esse*, a being unto himself. And Aquinas is working from a similar metaphysical framework when he concedes that '*necesse est*

*quod deus primo et principaliter suam bonitatem et seipsum amet*'. It was from just such a definition of God as self-loving love moreover that arose the substantialist notion of the Trinity as a *commercium* or *nexus amoris* in which Father, Son and Spirit exult in their self-regarding 'common possession' of each other. A far cry from the voice crying in the wilderness! The polar opposite of *kenosis*.

To understand God as kenotic *posse* is to see his love as a vulnerable and generous desire to be made fully incarnate in the eschatological kingdom – a kingdom possibilized by God but only realizable if and when we, human creatures, freely choose to respond to the divine call in word and action. Is this not the God of Abraham, Isaac and the Prophets whom Pascal contrasts with the God of the philosophers? Is this not a God before whom, in Heidegger's words, we could dance and kneel and pray – like David in the bible? Is this not the God who reveals himself, as Lévinas claims, in the naked and vulnerable face of the widow, orphan or famine victim – a God who created man because '*on est mieux à deux*'? Or whom Kierkegaard signalled when he wrote that 'Jesus Christ, even though he was one with the Father and the Spirit, still felt the need to love and be loved by man', adding 'If one denies this one can spiritualize God to the abstract point where he becomes cruelty itself'?

The eschatological God announced in the Old and New Testaments can now be recognized as a *deus adventurus* rather than a *deus absconditus* – as a God who *is not* but *may be*. Here is a God, in short, who negates and transcends all metaphysical conceptualizations of the divine in terms of a self-accomplished and self-adequate *esse* in order to reveal God as a *posse* whose Kingdom may yet come and whose will may yet be done on earth.

This brings us to the fourth and final point introduced by an eschatology of the possible – the relation of divine revelation to history. Traditional metaphysics could not convincingly account for the fact that God was at once timeless and temporal, at once transcendent of history and manifest in the world. In contradistinction to onto-theology, which tended to define God as a *nunc aeternum* residing outside of historical time, the post-metaphysical concept of *posse* suggests how God (as transcendent possibility) can give himself to human beings (as enactors of this possibility) through the adventure of history. The divine *posse* remains other not because it possesses an *esse* over and above the phenomenological being of our world. Its otherness takes the form of a radical transcendence of *possibility* which depends for its *actualization* on the historical actions of prophecy, covenant and salvation. The divine *posse* is not an 'other being' but an 'otherwise than being'. As Emmanuel Lévinas observes:

Man is indispensable to God's plan or, to be more exact, man is nothing other than the divine plans within being. . . . Man can do what he must do; he can master the hostile forces of history by helping to bring about a messianic reign, a reign of justice foretold by the prophets. The waiting for the Messiah marks the very duration of time.

('Judaism' in *The Lévinas Reader*, ed. S. Hand (Blackwell, 1989), p. 252)

The God of transcendence revealed to us in the Bible is not the God of ontology (i.e. of the philosophers) but the God of eschatology (i.e. of Abraham, Isaac and the prophets). To rethink God according to the Heideggerian analogy of *Vermögen* is to recognize new options for appreciating the religious belief in a God who may be *at* the end, and *as* the end of history. It opens a way to understanding God not as a *topos* of being but as a *utopos* other than being.

While Heidegger does not explore these options himself, he does make it clear that any theological interpretations of his own philosophical deconstructions of metaphysics – such as the metaphysical concept of the possible – must observe the critical procedures of an analogy of proper proportionality. This means that instead of grafting God directly onto being, or rather a deconstructive re-thinking of being, we must observe the hermeneutic difference between the presuppositions of religious faith and revelation, on the one hand, and the philosophical questioning of being, on the other. The analogy of proper proportionality recommended by Heidegger reads as follows: *Dasein* is to *Sein* what the religious thinker is to God. So that what we are exploring in the concluding section of this study is not – if we are to be true to Heidegger – an identification of God and Being as *Vermögen/Posse* but rather a properly proportionate analogizing of two parallel post-metaphysical concepts of the possible: the one as applied to being, the other as applied to God. And such analogies inevitably carry differences as well as similarities.

If being as *Vermögen* discloses itself to *Dasein* as a wonder that things exist (*thaumazein*), a care for being (*Sorge*) and a questioning of being (*Seinsfrage*), the eschatological *posse* reveals itself to believers as a call to faith and to ethical *praxis*. Heidegger's notion of *Vermögen* as a 'possibilizing love' which cares for (*sorgen*) and watches over (*wahren*) the *topos* of being is, we have been suggesting, closely analogous to the eschatological notion of 'possibilizing love' as kenotic charity. However, the love of being is very much a guarding over beings in their topological being-there as things of the world; whereas the eschatological love of God is strictly (or at least scripturally) speaking *not* 'of this world'. As Heidegger explains in the *Letter on Humanism*: '*Etwas vermögen bedeutet hier: es in seinem wesen wahren*'. Indeed, even when we are dealing with

the guarding over of what Heidegger calls a 'sacred' place – e.g. a temple, shrine, cathedral, holy mountain – we are, from an ontological point of view, dealing with one of the fourfold divisions of being (the sacred, mortals, sky and earth), and not with the revelation of a divine kenotic love *per se*. The latter implies an act of faith which reads the sacred in terms of eschatological revelation. So that it would seem fair to say that the phenomenological disclosure of the sacred serves as a necessary but not sufficient condition for the eschatological revelation of God.

A phenomenology of sacred places, rituals or symbols – as practised by the later Heidegger or Eliade for example – can teach us about the ways in which the divine manifests itself in and through the phenomenological horizon of our being-in-the-world. The eschatological *posse*, by contrast, while revealing itself phenomenologically through sacred places, rituals and symbols remains radically transcendent and other. For a phenomenology of the sacred, Christ and Apollo are brothers. And it is only if or when we adopt a hermeneutic of faith that we privilege one of these – e.g. the privileging of Christ in the Christian hermeneutic – as a unique incarnation of the eschatological *posse*. In this example, the God of Christian faith is not identical with a phenomenological concept of the sacred which is by definition polytheistic. For although the Christian God does, of course, reveal itself through icons of incarnation – ranging from the prophets and Christ to the saints, holy scripture and other places and objects of worship – it does so in a way that bears witness to a radical distance between the divine Other as vertical possibilization and being as a finite horizontal possibilization (*Vermögen*). This significant disparity between the infinite otherness of eschatological divinity and the finite being-there of the phenomenologically sacred is keenly preserved by the analogy of proper proportionality which enables us to both compare and contrast these two orders of possibilization. And the difference is ultimately a matter of belief.

Let us tease out some consequences of this difference. As that which *may be* the eschatological *posse* is also that which *should be*. Or to put it another way, while the ontological *posse* expresses itself as a *sein-können*, or capacity to be, the eschatological *posse* reveals itself as a *seinsollen*, or duty to be. It is this ethical exigency of the divine *posse* which Dostoyevsky alludes to when he declares that if God is dead all is permitted. From the point of view of an ontology of *Vermögen*, all is permitted. But this does not mean that ontology is immoral. It simply means that it is a-moral, or if one prefers, non-moral. Heidegger's fundamental ontology attempts to surpass the metaphysical framework which, since Plato, identified being and the good. Unlike Platonism which defined the highest Idea as the *Agathon*, or Thomism which declared that *ens et bonum convertuntur*, Heidegger affirms that the questioning



of being is a strictly phenomenological activity which describes beings as they appear, as phenomena – without judging morally as to whether they should or should not appear. Genuine ontology, Heidegger insists, is phenomenological description not ethical prescription. And he is equally reticent and non-committal with respect to theology, making no claims about which manifestations of the holy are true or false (e.g. as appearances of one true God).

This does not mean that Heidegger is either anti-ethical or anti-religious. It is simply a matter of recognizing the gap separating a phenomenology of finite being from an ethico-religious concern with that which is transcendent *vis-à-vis* the phenomenological horizon of Dasein's historicity. Heidegger is not concerned with God's existence or inexistence but with his phenomenological absence or presence. He does not deny the possibility of a transcendent deity; he merely acknowledges that such questions surpass the finite limits of a phenomenological ontology. And this is in keeping with Heidegger's admission to Herman Noack in 1954 that the divine which he invoked in the *Letter on Humanism* is the divine of poetic experience (e.g. of Hölderlin and Rilke) rather than the God of biblical revelation *per se*.

Where Heidegger and the poets speak of the contemporary 'lack' or 'absence' of the gods as a phenomenological event in the history of being, an eschatology of the possible might read this absence as a lack of human fidelity to the ethical exigencies of the New and Old Testaments – e.g. as a moral failure to realize the divine *posse* of social justice. Eschatologically viewed, the promised return of God is not just something which *may* happen but *must* happen, something believers have an ethical duty to bring about in this world through their historical actions. Heidegger's ontological approach to the return of the divine – as in the *Der Spiegel* claim that 'only a God can save us now' – has no such connotations of moral exigency. It is a *warten* rather than an *erwarten*, a will-less waiting rather than an urgent expectancy or hope for the coming of a kingdom which impells us to moral and social action. The ontological *Vermögen*, unlike the eschatological *posse*, does not depend on human intervention for its advent or return. The *Ereignis* of being *can be* independently of human action because it is, by Heidegger's own admission, a 'decree of being itself'. But the eschaton of God, by contrast, *may be* realized in history only if and when humans respond to the ethical call of revelation.

Whereas being and God can both be analogously described in terms of Heidegger's notion of 'loving possible' (*vermögend-mögende*), there are notable differences to be respected. And the most important of these may be expressed, in resumé, as follows: the eschatological view of the possible departs from the ontological in viewing mortals as beings who

transcend being toward what is other than being, towards the eschatological possibility of a kingdom yet to come.

## Notes

1 Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Max Verlag, Tübingen, 1927), translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1962). Henceforth the German shall be referred to as *SZ* and the English as *BT*. The statement concerning the primacy of possibility is to be found in *BT*, 63; *SZ*, 38.

2 *BT* sections 25–38, especially 32.

3 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 9.8.1059.

4 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I pars. qu. 3, a. 4, c. Thus as the Supreme Being, God (*Summum Ens*) becomes an omnipresence (*Omnipraesentia*) in all beings in so far as He is the cause of their Being (*causa essendi*); *STh*, I, 8, a. 3. For a full development of Heidegger's critique of the scholastic notion of God as metaphysical presence, see his *Identität und Differenz* (1957). For most comprehensive commentaries on the subject see B. Welte, *La Métaphysique de St. Thomas d'Aquin et la Pensée de l'Etre chez Heidegger* (RSPT, Oct. 1966) and Bertrand Rioux, *l'Etre et la Vérité chez Heidegger et St. Thomas d'Aquin* (PUF, Paris, 1963). We should also add that even though Aquinas and the transcendental Thomists of today – Rahner, Lonergan etc. – consider man as a being who transcends himself in quest of an always more absolute knowledge, they still continue to understand man primarily as a *substance*, whose being, even as it transcends itself, remains a permanently identical presence. Furthermore, even such metaphysicians acknowledge a role for possibility or potency in their notion of knowledge as conative and transcending, they ultimately subordinate this possibility to the final presence which is achieved when the knower reaches what is known, i.e. Aristotle's *Noesis Noeseos* or the Thomist notion of absolute knowledge as an absolute identity and transience of Being to itself. It is only with Descartes and the German Idealists that man is explicitly defined as a substance which is a 'self-presence'. It must be admitted that in points of detail, Heidegger's critique of the metaphysics of presence and substance leaves much to be desired. But the overall intention of his critique is clear enough.

5 *SZ*, 42f., 143–5, 188, 248f., 259.

6 We do not wish to make any claims here for the unconditional validity of Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's notion of time in book *V* of the *Physics*. Nor is it sure that all subsequent theories of time follow this interpretation. Augustine's understanding of time in *Confessions*, *XI*, would certainly seem to be an exception. But our purpose here is not so much to dispute the validity of Heidegger's interpretation as to state it; see note 41 below.

7 All of these metaphysical words for Being as presence share the common character of 'permanent subsistence' (*character des Ständige verbleibts*) such that the Being of a being is considered to be 'that which it always is', i.e., its subsistence in permanence. This is why in *BT* truth is no longer defined in terms of Being as 'permanent-subsistence' (*das Vorhandene*) but on the basis of the temporality of *Dasein* (i.e. as revelation and openness (*Erschlossenheit*)). For best examples of Heidegger's discussion of the priority of Being as presence *vis-à-vis* Being as possibility in the history of metaphysics see his *Die Physik Bei Aristoteles* (1958) and *Entwurf zur Geschichte des Seins als Metaphysik*, 458–80 (*Nietzsche*, Vol. II). As a good secondary source see Ysabel de Andia's *Présence*

et Eschatologie dans la Pensée de Heidegger (Editions Universitaires, 1975) particularly 150–90.

8 *BT* 271f.

9 *SZ* existentiell possibilities, 267; factual possibilities, 264; logical possibilities, 143; ontical possibilities, 312.

10 *BT* 250.

11 To express this idea Heidegger calls death the ultimate end (*Umwillen/Umzu* and *Wofur*) of all our possibilities, *ibid.* 93f, 109, 467.

12 On rapport between *Verstehen* and *Seinkönnen*, see *BT* sections 58, 68a, 73.

13 On authentic and inauthentic 'potentiality-for-Being' see *SZ* 233–5, 267–302. On three modes of inauthentic 'potentiality-for-Being' see: *SZ* existentiell, 260; factual, 341; ontical, 260.

14 The only critics to have stressed the importance of this distinction are, to my knowledge, the translators themselves, Macquarrie and Robinson, in a note 558, *BT*.

15 *SZ* 263, 268.

16 *ibid.* 263.

17 *ibid.* 267–8.

18 *ibid.* 267–9, 273–5, 298, 312.

19 *ibid.* 267.

20 *ibid.* 264: 'Die gewisse *Möglichkeit* des todes erschliesst das Dasein aber als *Möglichkeit* nur so, dass es vorlaufend zu ihr diese *Möglichkeit* als eigenstens *Seinkönnen* für sich ermöglicht.'

21 *SZ* 324; *BT* 271 – Macquarrie and Robinson offer the following translation here: 'To lay bare the upon which of a projection, amounts to disclosing that which *makes possible* what has been projected.' The translators' choice here of the second possibility of understanding this phrase is in line with my suggestion that the general movement of the approach to the possible in *BT* is progressively away from a metaphysical interpretation which would see the possible as a dimension (*protentia* or *possibilitas*) contained in the Being of man or things, towards a post-metaphysical interpretation (i.e. of fundamental ontology) which would see possibility as a dimension emerging towards man and things from that Being as Being (*Sein als Sein/Sein Uberhaupt*) which renders both man and things possible in the first place. Of course, Being cannot be understood here as residing in some Platonic otherworld before it comes to us; it is not *separate* from man and things but it is *different*: see the famous 'ontological difference' in *Identität und Differenz* (1957).

22 *BT* 371.

23 *ibid.* section 71, 423.

24 See *Was ist Metaphysik?* (1943 edition): 'Das Sein wohl west ohne das Seiende, niemals aber ein Seiendes ist ohne das Sein.' In *Identität und Differenz* (1957) develops this notion of the ontological difference between Being and being (or man as the highest form of being) at great length.

25 *BT* 446; *SZ* 394.

26 *BT* 488; *SZ* 437. We must point out here that there is nearly always an ambiguity in this work as to whether Being refers to the Being of Dasein or Being itself (as *Sein Uberhaupt*) or both at once!

27 See p. 85 in the English translation by William Lovitt, entitled *The Word of Nietzsche*, printed in the collection of Heidegger essays, *The Question concerning Technology and other Essays* (Harper and Row, 1977).

28 *ibid.* 85.

29 Translated by James Churchill as *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Indiana University Press, 1962).

30 *ibid.* 120f, 141f, 161f.

31 *ibid.* sections 34, 39–45, in particular p. 251: ‘Kant’s laying of the foundation of metaphysics, which for the first time subjects the internal possibility of the overtness of the Being of the essent to a decisive examination, must necessarily encounter time as the basic determination of finite transcendence, if indeed, it is true that the comprehension of Being in Dasein spontaneously projects Being on time.’

32 *ibid.* 252: ‘If the essence of transcendence is based on pure imagination, i.e., originally on time, then the idea of a “transcendental logic” becomes non-sensical, especially if, contrary to Kant’s original intention, it is treated as an autonomous and absolute discipline. Kant must have had an intimation of this collapse of the primacy of logic in metaphysics when, speaking of the fundamental characteristics of Being, “possibility” (what-being) and “reality” (which Kant termed “existence”), he said: “So long as the definition of possibility, existence and necessity is sought solely in pure understanding, they cannot be explained save through an obvious tautology”. And yet, in the second edition of the *Critique* did not Kant re-establish the supremacy of the understanding? And as a result did not metaphysics with Hegel, come to be identified with “logic” more radically than ever before?’

33 Heidegger himself makes this point in his conclusion to part 3 of this work, *ibid.* 207: ‘It is true that in order to wrest from the actual words that which these words “intend to say”, every interpretation must necessarily resort to violence. This violence, however, should not be confused with an action that is wholly arbitrary. The interpretation must be animated and guided by the power of an illuminative idea. Only through the power of this idea can an interpretation risk that which is always audacious, namely, entrusting itself to the secret élan of a work, in order by this élan to get through to the unsaid and attempt to find an expression for it. The directive idea itself is confirmed by its own power of illumination.’ In the light of this claim we can perhaps understand, if not necessarily agree with, Ernst Cassirer’s description of Heidegger’s interpretation as ‘a usurpation of the text rather than a commentary’ – ‘Bemerkungen zu Martin Heideggers Kant-Interpretation’, *Kant Studien*, xxxvi, No. 1/2 (1931) 17. To further appreciate the singular nature of this reading we must recall Heidegger’s acknowledgement in the preface to this book on Kant, that this entire study was originally intended as a section of the projected part 2 of *BT*, to be entitled: ‘The fundamental characteristics of a phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology under the guidance of the problematic of temporality.’

34 English translation by Edgar Lohner entitled *Letter on Humanism*, and published in *Phenomenology and Existentialism* (ed. R. Zaner and D. Ihde, Capricorn Books, NY, 1973) 147–81. I have made one important alteration in the Lohner translation (*ibid.* 150) in rendering ‘*Vermögen*’ as ‘possibilizing’ rather than ‘commanding’. Literally, *Vermögen* means to be able or to enable, i.e., to be or to make possible. Lohner’s rendition as ‘command’ as well as ‘potentiality’ and ‘is capable of’ – without an indication that it is the same word *Vermögen* which is being translated – makes little sense out of the German original. As this is the most crucial text in our commentary I cite the original passage in its entirety: *Das Denken ist – dies sagt: das Sein hat sich je geschicklich seines Wesens Angenommen. Sich einer ‘Sache’ oder einer ‘Person’ in ihrem Wesen annehmen, das heisst: sie lieben: sie mögen. Dies Mögen bedeutet, ursprünglicher gedacht: das Wesen schenken. Solches Mögen ist das eigentliche Wesen des Vermögens,*

dans nicht nur dieses oder jenes leisten, sondern etwas in seiner Herkunft 'wesen', das heisst sein lassen kann. Das Vermögen des Mögens ist es, 'kraft' dessen etwas eigentlich zu sein vermag. Dieses Vermögen ist das eigentlich 'Mögliche', jenes, dessen Wesen im Mögen beruht. Aus diesem Mögen vermag das Sein das Denken, Jenes ermöglicht dieses. Das Sein als das Vermögend-Mögende ist das 'Mög-liche'. Das Sein als das Element ist die 'stille Kraft' des mögenden Vermögens, das heisst des Möglichen. Unsere Wörter 'möglich' und 'Möglich' und 'Möglichkeit' werden freilich unter der Herrschaft der 'Logik' und 'Metaphysik' nur gedacht im Unterschied zu 'Wirklichkeit', das heisst aus einer bestimmten – der metaphysischen – Interpretation des Seins als *actus* und *potentia*, welche Unterscheidung identifiziert wird mit der von *existentia* und *essentia*, Wenn ich von der 'stillen Kraft des Möglichen' spreche, meine ich nicht das *possibile* einer nur vorgestellten *possibilitas*, nicht die *potentia* als *essentia* eines *actus* der *existentia*, sondern das Sein selbst, das mögend über das Denken und so über das Wesen des Menschen und das heisst über dessen Bezug zum Sein vermag. Etwas vermögen bedeutet hier: es in seinem Wesen wahren, in seinem Element einbehalten.

The identification of *vermögen* and *wahren* in this last sentence is very significant, for Heidegger sees *Wahren* (to guard or care for) as the root meaning of *wahrheit* (truth). Thus we see how easily Heidegger was able to identify 'possibilizing' as the 'truth of Being' (and later as *es gibt, esti, Ereignis*).

35 In fact, the two Beings in question here refer to the *Same* Being but differ in the way we think about this Being, i.e., as it reveals itself to man or as it is in itself. This duplicity in our thinking about Being is what Heidegger, in his later writings, referred to as the 'Januscope' (i.e., the double-glance).

36 Here I offer my own translation. The original German reads, as above: '*Das Vermögen des Mögens ist es "Kraft" dessen etwas eigentlich zu sein vermag. Dieses Vermögen ist das eigentlich "Mögliche", jenes, dessen Wesen im Mögen beruht.*' For Lohner's inadequate translation see *op. cit.* 150.

37 The original reads, as above: '*Das Denken ist, sich einer "Sache" oder einer "person" in Wesen annehmen, das heisst: sie lieben: sie mögen.*' For Lohner's translation see *op. cit.*, 151–2.

38 See Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totalité et Infini* (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1961): *Autrement qu'être* (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1974) and Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (trans. R. Smith, Fontana, 1947) 119–20.

39 The standard English translation of *Ereignis* is 'Appropriation', see Joan Stambaugh's translation of *Zeit un Sein* in *On Time and Being* (Harper and Row, 1972) 19–24. We must not overlook the significance of the fact that just as *Vermögen* can refer to wealth or power in the sense of 'property', so too *Ereignis* carries this sense of 'appropriation' as 'possession' or 'property' (as its etymological rapport with *Eigen-tum* suggests also). See Heidegger's play on this meaning in the following sentences from *On Time and Being*, for example, 22: 'Being proves to be destiny's gift of presence, the gift granted by the giving of time. The gift of presence is the property of appropriating'. ('Presence' here – *Answering* – is not to be confused with 'presence' in its metaphysical determinations – *ousia*, *substantia*, *actualitas*, *Vorhandenheit* – discussed earlier!). Or again 23: 'Because Being and Time are there only in appropriating [*Ereignis*], appropriating has the peculiar property of bringing man into his own [*eigenst*] as the being who perceives Being by standing within true [*eigentlich*] time. Thus appropriated, man belongs to appropriation.' As Heidegger goes on to say, to the extent that man is 'appropriated' and 'assimilated' by Being he is to be considered its 'belonging', as its property: that which is most proper to it.

40 See Staumbaugh's translation, *op. cit.* 8.

41 This essential link between 'possibility' on the one hand, and 'Being-understood-as-time-which-absences-as-it-presences' (i.e. as *Es gibt, Esti, Ereignis*) on the other, is clearly manifest in the following passages from a letter which Heidegger wrote to a young student called Buchner in 1950 (printed pp. 183–6 of *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter, Harper and Row, 1971): 'Being is in no way identical with reality or with a precisely determined actuality (i.e. simple, substantified presence). Nor is Being in any way opposed to being-no-longer and being-not-yet, these two belong themselves to the essential nature of Being. Even metaphysics already had, to a certain extent, an intimation of this fact in its doctrine of the modalities – which, to be sure, has hardly been understood, according to which possibility belongs to Being just as much as do actuality and necessity'. (. . .) 'The default of god and the divinitas is absence, but absence is not nothing; rather it is precisely the coming-into-presence [*Anwesen*], which must first be appropriated [*ereignen*], of the hidden fullness and wealth of what has been and what, thus gathered, is presencing [*anwesende*] of the divine in the world of the Greeks, in prophetic Judaism, in the preaching of Jesus. This no-longer is itself a not-yet of the veiled coming-appropriation [*Ereignis*] of its inexhaustible nature. Since Being is never the merely precisely actual, to guard Being is vigilance, watchfulness for the has-been and future destiny of Being. (. . .) The step back from the representational thinking of metaphysics . . . is necessarily part of thinking the thing, a thinking that thinks about the *possible advent* [*Ereignis mögliche*] of world.' Once again we stress that this notion of Being as an absence which presences (*Anwesen–Abwesen/Abwesen–Anwesende*) is not to be confused with the metaphysical notion of presence as something actual or actualized, as re-presentation or, in its highest form, as some eternal presence (*Ipsum Esse subsistens* or *Nunc Aeternans*). This 'overcoming' of the notion of presence as enduring substance in favour of a notion of 'presencing' (*Anwesen*) as a possibilizing (*Vermögen*) which presences as it absences, is what we have tried to highlight in this article. We have avoided using the presence-presencing contrast because in English this double-use of the same term 'presence' loses the sharp distinction of the German where two *different* terms are always used, i.e., *Vorhandenheit* (*ousia, substantia, actualitas*, etc.) on the one hand, and *Anwesen* on the other. The presence–possibility contrast expresses this difference very clearly, even in English.

42 This text was originally presented for Jean Beaufret's *Kierkegaard Vivant* (Gallimard, Paris, 1964) 164f. It appears as a complementary text to *On Time and Being* in Staumbaugh's translation of this text, *ibid.* 54.

43 *ibid.* 59–60.

44 For this and subsequent references in this final section see my earlier version of this argument, 'Heidegger, le possible et Dieu' in *Heidegger et la Question de Dieu* (ed. R. Kearney and J. S. O'Leary), Gallimard, Paris, 1980, 125–68.

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## Heidegger and the new images of science

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Theodore Kisiel

Heidegger and science? To some, the combination undoubtedly still sounds strange and unlikely, let alone fruitful and worthy of extended consideration. What could we possibly expect to learn about the inner workings of science from a thinker singularly and almost monotonously concerned with the time-honored and now grandiose question of Being? In the words of one astute commentator: 'On the longest day he ever lived, Heidegger could never be called a philosopher of science.'<sup>1</sup> And yet, those intimately acquainted with Heidegger's entire career can easily point to just such a day, and it must have been a long day indeed. For on July 27, 1915, the young Dr Heidegger (age 25) held his inaugural lecture before the philosophical faculty at the University of Freiburg in order to obtain his *venia legendi*, the privilege to teach in the German university system, conceiving the lecture precisely as a logical-epistemological examination of the concept of time in natural science and in historical science.<sup>2</sup>

True. But after all, it must also be granted that this was long before Heidegger became *Heidegger*, by achieving international notoriety as a philosopher of existence practically overnight in 1927 with the publication of *Being and Time*. And *Being and Time* is manifestly a philosophy of being and existence and not a philosophy of science. But the examination of existential phenomena in this *magnum opus* also includes reflections on an existential conception of science, distinct from his earlier logical conception, with a promise of a thorough-going interpretation of science as a positive mode of existence to be incorporated in the as-yet-unpublished<sup>3</sup> Third Division of the First Part of the project. Instead, science appears in a less positive light in the Second Part of the Heideggerian project, the part entitled 'the phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology' and later elaborated under the rubric of 'overcoming metaphysics'. This third approach to science can be labelled the 'metaphysical'

or 'epochal' conception of science, inasmuch as modern science is seen as a terminal epoch in the long history of metaphysics now coming to its end in the planetary dominion of technology. Note that metaphysics here does not refer to an abstract academic discipline but rather to the prevailing presuppositions and concrete interpretation of reality which uniquely stamp an age, for example, in the institutions and attitudes which that age accepts as a matter of course. In this vein, Heidegger's latest statements – two letters to conferences on his thought in this country and the interview on German television on the occasion of his 80th birthday<sup>4</sup> – make it clear that the present concretion of the question of Being is nothing less than the question of science and technology, insofar as the institutions and the attitudes they have provoked permeate the fabric of 20th century existence and thus indelibly mark the way we now live, move and have our being. In short, the question of Being now reads: What does it mean to be in a scientific-technological age?

Science and Being? The juxtaposition sounds even more ambitious and diffuse than the thematic combination Science and Society, to which increasing attention is being devoted by a number of disciplines, including the philosophy of science. Indeed, it is difficult to think of a reflection on science more far-reaching than Heidegger's, for whom science and technology are the culmination and fulfillment of the destiny of several millenia of Western philosophy. Moreover, inasmuch as they are taken to be the mortal gasps of a tradition of metaphysics which Heidegger is striving to overcome, science and technology appear in such a negative light that some have accused Heidegger of being a reactionary romantic and even a neo-Luddite. Recall his most notorious pronouncement in this vein: 'Science itself does not think.'<sup>5</sup> The adversary relationship which has over the decades developed between Heidegger and more scientifically-oriented philosophers perhaps finds its epitome in Rudolf Carnap's debunking of what he considers to be Heidegger's 'pseudo-statements', statements like 'Nothing itself nothings', which have become the stock examples of meaningless metaphysical statements still circulating in neo-positivist circles. Parenthetically, it is interesting to note that Carnap's critique, which appeared in the journal *Erkenntnis* in 1913, is entitled 'Overcoming of metaphysics through logical analysis of language',<sup>6</sup> antedating by several years Heidegger's own adoption of the phrase 'Overcoming of metaphysics'.

Heidegger's response to such critiques is characteristically sweeping. For him, the linguistic standards of clarity, formal exactness and univocity adopted by logical positivism find their natural place in the history of metaphysics in the spirit of modernity, in which (1) truth is certainty, (2) reality is objectivity, and (3) rationality finds its model in a *mathesis universalis*.<sup>7</sup> And when Heidegger asserts that science does not think, he is in fact referring to the positivistic image of science, in which logic and



scientific method reign supreme over scientific content, where even the certifications of confirmation are made subservient to the so-called hypothetico-deductive method. Heidegger thus seems to make unholy alliance with his worst enemies, the positivists, in accepting their image as the ultimate upshot of modern science.

His broad historical perspective thus devolves upon an image of science oriented towards logic and the positive fact, which from the perspective of contemporary philosophy of science is now considered to be far too narrow. For the last decade or so has witnessed an anti-positivist revolt of major proportions in the philosophy of science which has challenged the positivist image of science on each of the three scores named above and, moreover, has shifted the locus of the essence of science in a direction which appears quite amenable to the direction suggested by Heidegger's existential conception of science.<sup>8</sup> Instead of a logical analysis of the theoretical products of science, the new philosophies of science rely more heavily on historical case studies of the actual process of science. As a result of this shift in approach, Anglo-American philosophy now definitively reflects a wholesale overhaul of the positivistic treatment of science in terms of idealized formal systems mapping empirical data. The more historical image now views science as ongoing *research* in a changing *problem-situation* which is *interpreted* and resolved according to the resources of a particular *historical* and *conceptual context*.

By way of an initial guide to what follows, permit me to underscore once again the operative terms of this new image of science and to suggest in advance the different view of truth, objectivity and rationality which this new image implies. Note first that it does not particularly mention 'theory', 'fact', or 'method', which stood in the forefront of the positivistic image. The operative dimensions are rather (1) research or discovery, (2) the interrogative mood of a problem-situation, (3) the process of interpretation in a finite context, (4) which is a conceptual context or, more directly and simply put, a language. Finally, all of these dimensions are essentially pervaded by historical movement. Accordingly, the emphasis falls on the *dynamis* of truth *in via* rather than the *stasis* of truth once and for all, and on the holistic context rather than on an atomic objectivity. Consideration of the contextual process rather than the finished results of science suggests a more pragmatic and less syntactic and formal rationality, and, in view of the priority of the interrogative mood over the declarative mood, a more chiaroscuro and less clear and distinct rationality, more a finite sense of truth rather than the security of eternal verities.

One is immediately reminded here of Heidegger's efforts to shift the locus of truth from the proposition to the existentially rooted question, in order to view the finalization of truth against the background of the origin of truth, a background which Heidegger considers to be the more

original truth. The same reversal of orientation is strikingly evident in the new philosophies of science. By tracing the termination of the scientific process, finalized in the form of theoretical and observational statements, back to its most obscure origins in the problem-situation, the new approaches bring out the inseparable unity and reciprocal interplay of the 'context of justification' with the 'context of discovery' to the point of insisting that judicative verification must serve the interrogative demands of discovery. This reversal of the positivist stress on the truth of verification tends to be borne out by the culture of science as it is manifested in the attitudes of scientists, who are trained and conditioned to seek new discoveries, whose professional prestige hinges on just such inventiveness, who compete vehemently to be the first to solve the most current problems of their fields, who thus become involved in the numerous bitter disputes over the priority and independence of their discoveries. And nowhere is it more evident how truncated the positivists' image was than in their attitude to the problem of scientific discovery, which they systematically excluded from any consideration whatsoever by the strategy of relegating it to the 'waste basket' of 'mere' psychology. According to this positivist view, discovery is a matter of intuition, strokes of genius, the workings of the unconscious and other such imponderables and therefore not a fit subject for logical minds. This most important dimension of scientific activity was thus left unexplained and accordingly left to the raconteurs of those fascinating and at once obfuscating anecdotes of discoveries made as if by 'accident', and of illuminations that come from a magical 'nowhere': Archimedes' bath, Newton's apple, Kekulé's dream of the dancing serpents, Poincaré's step onto an omnibus, to name only some of the better-known. A narrow area of methodological rationality populated by secure results is thus sharply demarcated from a vast enveloping jungle constituting the irrationality of creativity, which is unceremoniously dispatched to the limbo of the non-science of science.

Even the narrow realm of logically secured results, demarcated as science proper by positivism, soon proved to be a paper-thin substitute for the thick situation in which science actually takes place. The bifocal view of positivism stratifies the structure of science into a formal calculus governed by the stable laws of logic over against an independent world of fixed observations. Science proper is thus made to move in a split-level universe defined by the eternal poles of logic and fact. The time-honored metaphysical quest for stability and security thus reasserts itself in the world of science as portrayed by positivism, in spite of its loudly professed anti-metaphysical stance, now in the modern guise of a methodological subject coupling with an empirical object. Despite its reputed anti-metaphysical stance, positivism betrays its metaphysical vestiges by proclaiming both poles of its universe to be uncorrupted by becoming

and change. In more epistemological terms, both formal and empirical levels are viewed as essentially uninterpreted, and interpretation becomes the act of the match maker who couples two virgins and brings them into a state of cohabitation. This is officiously executed by means of so-called 'correspondence rules', 'coordinating definitions', 'bridge principles', or 'rules of interpretation'. Feigl's description of this scientific situation is particularly graphic: The postulate system of the formal calculus is like a free-floating balloon hovering over the earth of empirical facts, which must be anchored to the soil of experience and filled with empirical meaning by means of connecting tubes, which permit an 'upward seepage of the empirical juice' of observational meaning to be pumped into the unvisualizable theoretical terms, thereby investing them with a partial interpretation. Interpretation is thus a matter of filling the theoretical forms of a parade of blimps by a one-way capillary pumping action skyward from the earth. This has come to be known as the Capillary Model of meaning and interpretation.<sup>9</sup>

In order to develop this theory of interpretation and meaning, the efforts of the logical positivists inevitably turned to linguistic reform. In the spirit of clarity and distinction aimed at expunging all vestiges of metaphysical obfuscation from the language of science, they sought to extricate from ordinary language two very non-ordinary languages, (1) an ideal language purified according to the demands of mathematical logic and (2) a neutral observation language based on the ontology of phenomenism. But decades of effort have not yielded anything like a satisfactorily neutral observation language and it soon became apparent that only a small part of science in its most advanced theoretical efforts even approached the high degree of formality demanded by mathematical logic. Recently, not only the possibility but even the desirability of these linguistic reforms for the philosophy of science have been challenged by old-timers like Carl Hempel as well as by the new upstarts, on the grounds that they constitute a ruthless abstraction from the complex reality of scientific theorizing, in which observation is *always already* theory-laden and formal algorithms are always '*already* rich with meaning, charged with structural representations of phenomena'.<sup>10</sup> The two extremes which positivism sought to purify out of scientific practice are *in practice* never so pristine pure, but have all along been co-habiting on the sly, in an alliance which is not only not unholy but in fact the very source of the fertility of science. To separate the two extremes and to attempt to 'purify' them only serves to remove science from the profound and comprehensive reality with which it has come in contact in its formulations. Purification would mean sterilization. Science finds its proper element not in the thin clarity of extremes sifted out by the misplaced discreteness of logical positivism but in the already interpreted, conceptually organized context cultivated for science by a historical

tradition which has been transmitted to it largely in and through the usages of ordinary language, in which theory and observation already correspond with one another in the reality about which they speak.

Explicit and formalized rules of correspondence are accordingly by and large unnecessary in scientific theorizing. It is therefore not surprising that they have been notoriously difficult to pinpoint. Instead of explicit rules bridging the chasm between formal and empirical levels, actual practice suggests more of a tacit process of mutual interpretation of a theory by its particulars and of particulars by their comprehensive theory in terms of the cues of the problem-situation to which they are addressed. The process can be described in terms of what the philological tradition has called the 'hermeneutic circle', which cannot be construed as a vicious circle because it is ultimately not only logical but also and primarily ontological. For the spiral movement thus generated incessantly wends its way down toward the non-verbal frontiers of a verbally structured problem-situation, which in turn is *always already* understood according to the usages of ordinary language as well as being invested with the meanings developed by the tradition of the discipline in question. Ordinary language as well as scientific language thus always articulates the problem-situation, and solving the problem involves the ability to see the scientific linguistics of the problem *in* and *through* the ordinary language in which it is always couched. Recall the famous example of Eddington's elephant, a problem which is expeditiously solved if one knows how to translate it into the terms of the standard inclined-plane problem of physics. Viewed in this way, interpretation now is the direct perception of family resemblances between problem-situations, one already solved and the other in need of solution, without the aid of intermediate correspondence rules. If the function of correspondence rules is to correlate scientific expressions with nature, then this function is now served by these exemplar problem-solutions which one finds at the end of chapters in physics and chemistry books. One does not master his science until he 'gets the knack' of how to use and apply these prototype problem-solutions,<sup>11</sup> which are notably expressed in the language of models and metaphors, of waves, particles, hydraulic models for the flow of electric current, and the like.

This dimension of scientific language, which was forced to the periphery by positivism and downgraded to a 'mere' heuristic function, now comes to the fore in the new image of science and emerges front and center as the operative language in interpretation and discovery. In the words of Heidegger, one might accordingly say that the new image of science assumes 'a transformed relation to the essence of language'. For the operative language is now viewed as a cultural storehouse of metaphors latent with untold possibilities for adaptation to the shifting demands of the changing problematic of science. The leading edge of

scientific change is now situated in the interaction of the old language with a new situation which evokes surprising aspects from the old language not previously seen in it. The metaphoric shift ensuing from the translation of the scientific language from one problem-situation to another may at times shift the very bases of a scientific discipline, by making a hitherto peripheral metaphor into a root metaphor and thus reweaving the fabric of fundamental concepts of the scientific domain, producing as it were a re-edition of the Book of Nature. This ability of language to adapt to the changing demands of the scientific problematic constitutes a more diachronic sense of scientific rationality as compared to the synchronic concern for the form and validity of finished logical systems. This new notion of scientific rationality sees change and rationality as not only not incompatible but in fact essential to one another. In the face of a historically changing world, the most rational thing to do is to change with it.

Instead of the hermeneutic model, which focuses on the dynamics of the linguistic change which takes place in interpretation, an evolutionary model of 'variation and selective perpetuation' of concepts and hypotheses is more commonly used among philosophers of science to comprehend the rationality of scientific change. Thus, Toulmin speaks of the 'ecological demands' of an 'intellectual environment' imposing a 'selective pressure' on the available pool of conceptual variants in order to filter out the most adaptable for perpetuation.<sup>12</sup> In a similar vein, the hermeneutic model underscores the importance of sensitivity to contextual determinants as guides to the appropriate interpretation of texts. The same applies to discovery. As we search for the appropriate word for a particular context, we are acutely aware that the context 'demands' the recalcitrant word and no other, 'rejects' the ones we do pose to it and instead 'suggests' other directions of interrogation. The situation 'asks' to be straightened out in certain ways while it screens out others, and we must be responsive to these interrogative solicitations and salient vectors if we are to come to an appropriate solution. Such attempts to describe the selection process seem to attribute a much more active role to the context than a more positivistic mentality, wary of anthropomorphism, would allow. But it is in fact an attempt to establish a new and more holistic sense of 'objectivity' – *Sachlichkeit und nicht Objektivität* – oriented to the Gestalt complex of the problematic situation. Both the hermeneutic and the evolutionary model converge remarkably on such a demand-response 'logic' of selection imposed by the situation itself, and in fact take us to the threshold of a reversal after the fashion of the later Heidegger, where what is said and what is talked about now not only talks back to us but even decides for us! Thus, in his meditation on the nature of thinking in *Was heisst Denken?*, Heidegger culminates in a form of this question which he formulates variously as 'What calls

us to thought?', 'what invites (appeals to, demands, instructs, directs) us to think?' and hence 'What gives directions to thought?'<sup>13</sup> Whence the hermeneutic maxim to which Ricoeur sometimes alludes: The context decides, and we are led to decide accordingly, as we use all available contextual determinants in order to expose the most appropriate sense of a message charged with a fluid potential of meanings. Consider, by way of example, the sentences 'Man is a wolf', 'Juliet is the sun', 'The world is my oyster', in which the action of the context excludes the literal sense by way of its absurdity and then directs us to more metaphorical senses. It is in terms of this interplay between restrictions and latitudes that one ultimately acknowledges that meaning is interpreted by its context, i.e., in terms of what the context permits.

But the context not only determines which interpretations are appropriate and thus provide an adequate solution to our problems but also, and perhaps more importantly, which problems are appropriate, in terms of both the importance of the problem and the readiness of the field to handle it. The researcher must take his cues from his historical situation in exercising 'good judgment' with regard to the most promising problems as well as their adequate solutions. Prior to the right solution comes the much more subtle – and risky – decision of asking the right question, and in the right way, under pain of squandering years in a fruitless search for the resolution of a problem which simply will not yield. A scientific problem quite often must await its opportune time before scientific developments provide it with the resources that make it veritably 'ripe' for solution. After a long incubation period, there comes a time when the potential of the field is such that the discovery of an outstanding solution cannot be postponed for long. Sometimes, precipitous events may suddenly turn a 'fruitless' search into a time to 'cultivate' new theoretical possibilities in order to 'reap' the benefits of a recent intellectual 'harvest' of 'seminal' ideas from a neighboring 'field'.<sup>14</sup> When the opportune time for a problem comes, then the direction of its solution practically forces itself as 'the obvious guess'<sup>15</sup> on the researcher steeped in his field, perhaps even leading to its simultaneous discovery by independent workers in the field. Consider, for example, the discovery of the double helical structure of DNA, prompted most proximately by the discovery of the  $\alpha$  helical structure of a protein molecule and supported by the opportune confluence of efforts in the disciplines of bacterial genetics, crystallographic physics and organic chemistry. The genesis and rapid blossoming of molecular biology can be specifically located at the intersection of these three domains, whose fusion was brought about by Watson and Crick's discovery, which in turn provided the key insight into the plethora of problems surrounding the genetic code or, in more popular jargon, 'the secret of life'. Molecular biology is just one example of a minor and peripheral specialty which suddenly and dramatically

takes over the vanguard in the history of science and unfolds a new subject matter in a creative surge which makes it grow by geometric leaps and bounds from a handful of specialists to a dominant field populated by a sizable number of distinguished scientists. Other examples are x-ray crystallography and spectroscopy which played just such key roles at the turn of the century in the development of quantum physics. Such historical experiences suggest that it would be disastrous to distribute funds equitably to all fields; the task of the allocators is to play midwife to these spontaneous surges in burgeoning new fields of discovery, which are opening up at the expense of older fields in the process of being exhausted.

The unevenness of the internal history of science, with its surprising turns of events and unexpected surges in forward progress through conceptual explosions which intersperse long incubation periods of gradual development, suggests the Heideggerian model for historicity in terms of the intermittent rhythms of unconcealment and concealment, truth and error. With all the continuing emphasis on the winners of the Nobel sweepstakes, there is now also a growing recognition of the important, even essential, role of the genial error in the history of science. There comes a time when a promising idea must be followed through to an ill-fated dead-end and thus shown to be a blind alley, a *Holzwege*. Such failures may well merit the name of science just as much as those endeavors for which the Nobel prizes are awarded. Shapere suggests, for example, that Justus Liebig's search, in the early days of organic chemistry, for a mathematizable 'vital force' operative in organisms, analogous to the attractive forces of matter, was just such an enterprise.<sup>16</sup> Of course, even the successes in science pick their way through a gauntlet of wrong turns and dead-ends. For instance, the initial steps toward the DNA discovery were marked by wrong decisions on both of the initial questions concerning the helical model, namely, the number of strands and the nature of the chemical bonding between the strands. Popper in particular has emphasized the trial-and-error character of scientific procedure and the significant role played by falsifiability in the logic of science. And Polanyi points to another kind of unavoidable error interwoven into the history of science, citing his own scientific work on physical adsorption as an example of a discovery not immediately accepted by the scientific community because it was an idea too much out of season with the reigning paradigm of physical chemistry at the time of its initial publication.<sup>17</sup>

The erratic course of the history of science is directly tied to the unspecifiability inherent in the process of scientific discovery. As noted above, the desire to eradicate this erratic dimension from science has found its extreme expression in the truncated image which equates science with the methodically controllable and verifiable and

consequently excludes any consideration of the dimension of discovery. But if one refuses to exclude discovery from the essence of science and at the same time considers discovery at its fundament to outstrip all method and logic, then, for such a one, science would not be science without its profound roots in the unspecifiable, and therefore cannot be explained in terms of wholly explicit, wholly formalizable knowledge. What is to be called science would then include, for example, the unspecifiable art of 'good judgment' by the scientific administrator groping in the dark in making his educated guesses on the most promising lines of research impending in his field.

Among the new philosophers of science, Michael Polanyi in particular has pursued this direction of thinking to the point of outlining the ultimately ontological character of this dimension of the unspecifiable as it makes its presence felt in every phase of the scientific endeavor. Under the rubric of 'personal knowledge', he stresses the central role of a kind of intimacy between the scientist and nature, an indwelling in its harmonies by means of theoretical patterns through which the discoverer senses the presence of the hidden truth which has yet to be revealed. The scientist acquires this intimacy by entering into the inherited interpretive framework of science and passionately committing himself to learning its ways. As they say in the vernacular, it is a matter of 'getting a feel for' nature in the way science currently comes in contact with it. This tacit knowledge can only be conveyed by practice and from practicing scientists, through whom the novice assimilates the subliminal premises of his science. These premises weave the framework within which all of his scientific assertions are made, and yet, for this very reason, they themselves cannot be asserted. But despite its inarticulate state, this network is known intimately as his own interpretative framework, in which he dwells 'as in the garment of [his] own skin'.<sup>18</sup> Out of this background comes the particular but unspecifiable clues which guide the researcher from surmise to surmise, as well as providing intimations of being on the right track and drawing nearer and nearer to a solution. Even the resulting theory is more than explicit knowledge; it is a foreknowledge of things yet unknown, unforeseeable, and perhaps even inconceivable at present, and it is in anticipation of these implications that the scientist passionately commits himself to this theory. For he believes himself to have come in contact with a reality whose inexhaustible depth, independence and power will permit it to manifest itself through his theory in ways even beyond his ken. He believes his theory is true, even without confirmations, but also and primarily because of the indeterminate range of future discoveries that he expects will issue from it.

Thus Polanyi sees the entire process of discovery, from initial investiture through the explanatory phase to the final commitment to its outcome, under the sway of what he calls the 'ineffable domain',<sup>19</sup> which



could readily be one of Heidegger's more topological names for Being. Polanyi himself explicitly acknowledges the kinship between the pretheoretical know-how that he calls 'personal knowledge' and Heidegger's conception of *Seinsverständnis*.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, he after a fashion performs a Heideggerian kind of reversal when he espies, in and through the tacit skills, a tacit dimension of reality operative as the alpha and omega of science.

In Polanyi's account, the locus of science is clearly displaced from the image of science as method to that of science as a craft skill, an intellectual 'savvy' and tacit judgment which cannot be supplanted by method, precedes and grounds it, and provides it with its viability. Put most starkly, science viewed from this side of its coin is no longer a science at all but rather an art, a *techne* in the best Greek sense of an artistic know-how capable of evoking (bringing forth, producing) truth in and through an artwork. The scientist is made a kin to the artisan-craftsman steeped in his art, responsive to his material as he attunes himself to it through his tools, and sensitive to how they relate to human existence. This emphasis provides a profound concretization to the few remarks in *Being and Time* (section 69b) on the roots of theoretical behavior in praxis, which fundamentally constitute Heidegger's existential conception of science, i.e. science as an authentic mode of Being-in-the-world.

Moreover, Polanyi's account also serves to counteract Heidegger's harsh and bleak metaphysical conception of modern science as 'the absolute priority of method over its possible objects'.<sup>21</sup> But Heidegger himself promotes a similar move in his lecture of 1954 entitled 'Science and deliberation', which I believe can be read with great profit in the light of Polanyi's exposition of the tacit dimension of science.<sup>22</sup> For the aim of this lecture is to promote a deliberation on a certain 'inconspicuous state of affairs' latent in the heart of the matter of science. This incipient state of affairs which pervades the essence of the sciences is however by and large ignored and passed over in silence by them, since their natural orientation is more toward certified results and further progress in knowledge. Yet no matter how far removed the sciences seem to be from this incipient core, it is indispensable to them. They inevitably reside in it as a stream in its hidden source. Accordingly, the most profound way of thinking of science would seek to attune itself to this subliminal mooring in the facticity in which the sciences find their home. But such a 'grass-roots' thinking in proximity to the source would involve a violent reversal of the normal movement of scientific progress. Indeed, it would constitute a regress from the sciences to their presuppositional underpinning. Because of their orientation away from their source, and the momentum of their progressive movement, the sciences of their own power cannot make this leap back to the source from which they have sprung.<sup>23</sup> This is the task of foundational thinking.

Even more worthy of attention in the present situation is that the very spirit of modernity, seduced by the spell of certitude, guaranteed truth and assured progress, which encourages us to view science as a panacea, radically militates against such a reversal. More and more, scientific progress assumes the character of a forward project without a grounding facticity. Kant<sup>24</sup> thus captured the essence of modern science when he noted that 'a light broke upon all students of nature' when they realized that nature is best understood according to a project (*Entwurf*) of one's own making. Rather than subjecting ourselves to 'nature's leading-strings', we must force nature to answer questions of our own choosing. In this vein, Einstein spoke of the 'free-inventions' of hypothesizing and Galileo readily admitted that fictional idealizations such as 'freely falling body' and 'frictionless plane' constituted a veritable 'rape of the senses'.

Yet both saw the adventures of hypothesizing counterbalanced by the security and control of method. Among the new philosophers of science, Feyerabend has reacted so violently against the image of science as method and of its truth as a security blanket that he highlights the heady willfulness of science to the point of arbitrariness. He thus proposes an anarchistic image of science based on the single methodological principle of 'anything goes' (short of murder). In practice, this entails 'scientific' opposition to everything which is now accepted by the scientific establishment. In short, currently accepted facts must constantly be opposed by counterinductions from experience and accepted theories countered by the proliferation of alternative theories inconsistent with the accepted point of view, whereby one not only learns by his mistakes (as Popper maintains) but also deliberately proves all rules by seeking their exceptions. In as much as Feyerabend concedes the need for a certain measure of tenacity to already established theories, his recipe stops just short of the nihilistic extreme of turning scientific change into a Dionysian frenzy of activism. Though at times it may approach slapstick pandemonium, when the active interplay between tenacity and proliferation becomes pitched to its most tumultuous, so that the thick of the action appears 'unreasonable, nonsensical, mad, immoral . . . when seen from the point of view of a contemporary'.<sup>25</sup> Feyerabend's irreverent recipe of calculated willfulness and recalcitrance aims to turn science into the carefree abandon of a frolic. Against the image of the scientist as *l'homme sérieux* hard at work in the solemn and even sacred task of 'the search for truth', Feyerabend would locate the sources of scientific discovery as much in spontaneous play as in reasoned planning. Whence his 'plea for hedonism' which would change science 'from a stern and demanding mistress into an attractive and yielding courtesan who tries to anticipate every wish of her lover'.<sup>26</sup>

But Heidegger espies a similar frenetic character to science precisely within the secure confines of its method. Willful projects continue to

proliferate through the fissioning of scientific disciplines into specializations, each of whom are in turn prolific in the production of results. Each specialty imposes severe limits upon itself and the kinds of questions it wishes to pose, thereby cutting itself off all the more from an awareness of its enabling ground. The advantage of this strategy of minimizing thinking is to maximize results, so that the overall effect of the multiplication of specialties is the accumulation of a vast store of detailed, technically useful information. Here we encounter the narrower technocratic image of science as research and discovery which is wholly compatible with what Nietzsche termed the triumph of scientific method over science. 'Research' in this sense is now Big Business. The proliferation in recent decades of the 'think tanks' of research institutions for various and sundry purposes suggests to what extent the 'knowledge industry' has replaced manual and machine labor as the most important productive force today. That the businesslike pursuit of knowledge is virtually open-ended while at the same time remaining systematic indicates how the security of method and the adventure of research can be interlocked in their progressive drift toward rootlessness. To paraphrase Victor Hugo, technical science has long sought a perpetual motion machine. It has finally found it . . . in itself.

This total mobilization of human talent as well as natural resources finds its most intense expression in the uninhibited will to power toward planetary domination through technology. By means of the power of technology, nature has been provoked into revealing hitherto unsuspected sources of electrical and nuclear energy. Recently, even outer space has been placed at our disposal as another resource to be exploited. So sure were our planners of the power of technology that the question was never whether we would land on the moon, only how soon and by what means. The new cybernetic sciences appear to know no bounds in the possibilities of planetary planning and the capacity to work our will upon the entire earth. It appears that man is now in a position to assume the role of unequivocal lord and master exercising dominion over the earth.

But is the technological will really a freedom without limits? The ecology and the energy crisis dramatically testify to the contrary. And there is science-fiction's recurring nightmare of the giant computer turning the tables and overpowering its masters. In numerous ways, the technological matrix is impelled by a will to total efficiency which factors in man himself to the point of total absorption, who is after all also a natural resource to be exploited for its energy and distributed to its most effective stations in the 'manpower' grid. Technology thereby takes revenge on man himself.

But in the Heideggerian perspective, all of these are but symptoms of a more radical limit to our freedom, a fundamental non-willing latent in the very will to will of the technological project. To acknowledge this

most extreme limit is to take the first resolute step toward displacing this seemingly free-floating project back to its most factitious roots. For we can always ask: What demands that we demand to the point of excess in the technological mode of existence? What provokes us to provoke nature resourcefully to the point of including our own resourceful selves? Perhaps we will then see that the thoughtless willfulness of exploitation is basically not of our own will. Our changing of the face of the earth is ultimately not of our own doing. We have long ago been led to the historical destiny of technology and can no longer turn back. No International Planning Commission or Committee of Scientists have done so, nor can they really hope to do so.

But we can turn our thoughtless willfulness around by first acknowledging the oblivion of its rootedness, as well as the oblivion of this oblivion, so that we might then come to terms with the flow of our current historical situation, what is taking place in it, the leeway it grants us and what we can start with it. This orientation of questioning thus aims to bring us 'to experience the call of a more original revelation' within and through the truth of technology, to espy the harbingers of a new setting in and through the scientific-technological world, to find new roots for life in such a world, to find ways of making ourselves at home in this world, so that, in one of Heidegger's favorite expressions, we may once again learn 'to dwell poetically upon this earth'. Accordingly, Heidegger clearly hopes that the backtrack into and through the metaphysical conception of science and technology will be propaedeutic to a more poetic conception.

One of its central tasks would be to elaborate a new sense of the naturality of nature in and through the artifacts of science and technology, 'to recast and recover the calculability and technicality of nature in the open mystery of a newly experienced naturality of nature'.<sup>27</sup> And perhaps the time is not so far off for such a development. The ecology crisis and energy crisis suggest certain limits to our sense of nature as universally manipulable, whether as a scientifically calculable system of forces or as a technological fund of resources, and accordingly evoke the need to let it be, to cultivate, conserve, foster and cherish the *Dasein* of our planet in a more responsive manner. One might also hope for a measure of a poetic sense of science and technology from the more explicitly artistic endeavors to use their materials – Heidegger might call these the 'earth' of science and technology – in the mobiles of constructivism, technological sculpture, film, perhaps even cybernetic music. Perhaps some day we may well learn to view, for example, synthesized plastics as no less natural than things found more directly in nature. Then there is the poetic-mystical strain in the Marxist tradition which sees the progressive naturalization of man through technology in mutual coordination with a progressive humanization of nature. Among others

in this tradition, Marcuse, an old student of Heidegger, looks toward the emergence of a New Science and New Technology in which nature and man would no longer be related in the mutual exploitation of master and slave but rather in the mutual liberation of communicating partners, precisely to the degree that technology pacified the forces of nature by liberating them from the brutality, ferocity and blindness which has made nature our antagonist from time immemorial.<sup>28</sup> Astounding as it may sound to our positivistically conditioned ears wary of all anthropomorphisms, this kind of suggestion is being seriously entertained by thinkers of the most diverse philosophical perspectives. For example, Mary B. Hesse's quest for a new form of objectivity for science prompts her to consider a more internal relationship between man and at least biological nature than an epistemology based on the subject-object relationship would normally allow.<sup>29</sup> Others have suggested that such an intimate indwelling in wholly new dimensions of nature is acquired in our habituation to the instrumental complexes of experimental science.

So there is no lack of signs of a vigorous quest for a new habitat for man in a new, more ecological sense of the naturalness of nature, a more historical and topological form of objectivity (*Sachlichkeit*), a less mathematical and more hermeneutical notion of rationality.<sup>30</sup> Even though science has been rendered thoughtless by the positivistic image of science, there appears to be no dearth of thinkers, scientists included, seeking to provide us with more imaginative images of a science more responsive to the most profound exigencies of the human situation. I have tried to suggest that Heidegger has blazed a trail which helps us to see how this proliferation of new images converges on the simple heart of the matter in which we live, move and are.

## Notes

1 William J. Richardson, 'Heidegger's critique of science', *New Scholasticism* xlii (1968) 511-36. But this opening sentence of the article is moderated by a concluding paragraph suggesting how a philosophy of science could be elaborated within a Heideggerian framework.

2 This early lecture, 'Der Zeitbegriff in der Geschichtswissenschaft', is now readily available in the collection of Heidegger's major works from the period 1914-16. Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Frühe Schriften* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1972) pp. 355-75. This early lecture marks the high point of what I have called Heidegger's logical conception of science, as distinguished from his later existential and metaphysical conceptions. Cf. my essay, 'On the dimensions of a phenomenology of science in Husserl and the young Dr. Heidegger', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* iv (1973) 217-34.

3 This is no longer quite accurate in view of the recent publication of the lecture course of 1927, in which philosophy itself is taken as the 'science of

being'. Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, volume 24 of the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1975), pp. 15ff.

4 Manfred S. Frings (ed.), *Heidegger and the Quest for Truth* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1968) pp. 17–21; John Sallis (ed.), *Heidegger and the Path of Thinking* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1970) pp. 9–11; Richard Wisser (ed.), *Martin Heidegger im Gespräch* (Freiburg/Munich: Alber, 1970) pp. 67–77.

5 Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, translated by Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper and Row, 1968) p. 8. For an extended commentary on this remark, cf. my essay, 'Science, phenomenology, and the thinking of being', in Joseph J. Kockelmans and Theodore J. Kisiel (eds.), *Phenomenology and the Natural Sciences: Essays and Translations* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970) pp. 173ff.

6 'Überwindung der Metaphysik durch logische Analyse der Sprache'. The English translation by Arthur Pap, 'The elimination of metaphysics through logical analysis of language', appears in *Logical Positivism*, edited by A. J. Ayer (Glencoe: Free Press, 1959) pp. 60–81.

7 These three intertwining dimensions, which will serve as touchpoints of comparison in what follows in the Heideggerian meditation, ultimately lead back to the pre-Socratic roots of the 'tree of metaphysics' and correspond respectively to those most elemental of Greek words, *alethia*, *physics* and *logos*. Cf. Werner Marx, *Heidegger and the Tradition*, translated by Theodore Kisiel and Murray Greene (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971).

8 Cf. my essays, 'Scientific discovery: logical, psychological or hermeneutical?', *Explorations in Phenomenology*, edited by David Carr and Edward S. Casey (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973) pp. 263–84; and 'Zu einer Hermeneutik naturwissenschaftlicher Entdeckung', *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Wissenschaftstheorie II* (1971) 195–221. For recent developments in the new movement, cf. Theodore Kisiel, with Galen Johnson 'New philosophies of science in the USA: a selective survey', *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Wissenschaftstheorie V* (1974) 138–91.

9 'New philosophies of science in the USA', pp. 142–4.

10 Norwood Russell Hanson, 'Logical positivism and the interpretation of scientific theories', *The Legacy of Logical Positivism: Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, edited by Peter Achinstein and Stephen F. Barker (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1959) pp. 67–84, esp. p. 84. This recurring reference to the *immer schon* is what Heidegger would call the facticity of science.

11 Which is what T. S. Kuhn means by 'paradigms' in the strict sense.

12 Stephen Toulmin, *Human Understanding*, Volume I: *The Collective Use and Evolution of Concepts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) pp. 134–44, 211–12.

13 *What is Called Thinking?*, pp. 114–17.

14 The agricultural metaphors which scientists themselves use in describing their situation are reminiscent of Heidegger's treatment of poetic 'Building dwelling thinking'.

15 James D. Watson, *The Double Helix: A Personal Account of the Discovery of the Structure of DNA* (New York: New American Library, Signet PB, 1968) p. 41.

16 Dudley Shapere, 'Plausibility and justification in the development of science', *The Journal of Philosophy* lxiii (1966), pp. 611–21.

17 Michael Polanyi, *Knowing and Being*, edited by Marjorie Grene (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969) pp. 87–96.

18 Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964) pp. 60, 64.

19 *ibid.*, p. 87.

20 *ibid.*, p. x.

21 In the letter published in Sallis (ed.), *Heidegger and the Path of Thinking*, p. 10.

22 Martin Heidegger, 'Wissenschaft und Besinnung', *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen 1954) pp. 45–70. On the *unscheinbaren Sachverhalt*, cf. esp. pp. 59–70.

23 *What is Called Thinking?*, p. 18.

24 In a famous passage (B XIII) in the Preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

25 Paul Feyerabend, 'Against method: outline of an anarchist theory of knowledge', *Analyses of Theories and Methods of Physics and Psychology*, edited by Michael Radner and Stephen Winokur, *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Volume IV (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970) p. 103, note 33.

26 Paul Feyerabend, 'Consolations for the specialist', *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, edited by Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970) p. 229.

27 Martin Heidegger, *Hebel der Hausfreund* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1957) p. 24.

28 Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964) pp. 166–7, 236–8.

29 Mary B. Hesse, *In Defence of Objectivity* (London/New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

30 Cf. my essays: 'The mathematical and the hermeneutical: on Heidegger's notion of the apriori', *Martin Heidegger: In Europe and America*, edited by Edward G. Ballard and Charles E. Scott (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973) pp. 109–20; 'Commentary on Patrick Heelan's "Hermeneutics of Experimental Science in the Context of the Life-World"', *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Wissenschaftstheorie V* (1974) 124–35; 'Hermeneutic models for natural science', *Die Phänomenologie und die Wissenschaften*, edited by E. W. Orth as *Phänomenologische Forschungen* 2 (Freiburg/München: Alber, 1976) pp. 180–91.

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## Heidegger and the physical sciences<sup>1</sup>

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Catherine Chevalley

Mathematical physics holds an important place in the corpus of Heidegger's writings. Though this is especially evident in the course of lectures he gave in 1935, which were published as *Die Frage nach dem Ding*, it also emerges from many other pieces. However, Heidegger never expressed his concern with physics otherwise than through remarks, hints that are more or less extended promises to come back to the topic on some other occasion, or through elliptical judgments and paradoxes. On the other hand, it is well known that from 1938 on, Heidegger emphasized that one should be aware that the crucial problem was the problem of the essence of technology. Science, in as much as it is characteristic of modern times, rests on the foundation of technology, provided one means by technology something other than applied science or mechanization. Rather, technology means the very project of representing the thing as that which perdures through change in order to subject it to calculation. At first sight it would seem that Heidegger never mentions mathematical physics in any other context than the one delineated by such an identification of science with the essence of technology.

Nevertheless, I would like to suggest here that the way in which Heidegger chose to question mathematical physics before 1938 provides a clue to the privilege he conferred afterwards upon technology and that it also explains certain surprising features of relevant passages in the lectures he gave in the year 1950. This interpretation is however based on the assumption that Heidegger changed his mind about the meaning of the natural sciences.

I shall start indirectly by pointing out a difficulty which seems to be purely circumstantial. The difficulty arises when Heidegger refers to a sharp difference between two periods of modern science. Heidegger hints at such a difference throughout all his works, starting from 1927 – when this difference actually emerges in the development of physics – up to



the 'Seminaires du Thor'. There is no need to comment upon each occurrence and it will be enough to quote the following section of the 1953 lecture, entitled 'Wissenschaft und Besinnung'.

This summary reference (it concerns the preceding pages) to the difference which separates the two epochs in modern physics makes it possible to see clearly where the change from one to the other is to be located: in the apprehension and the determination of the kind of objectivity through which nature lets itself be known. But, in the course of this transition from classical, geometrical physics to atomic and field theory physics what does *not* change is the fact that nature is assumed in advance to be responsive to the demands made of it, demands which are laid out in theoretical terms. In the most recent phase of atomic physics however, the object itself also disappears, with the result that both the subject and the object come to be subordinated to the subject-object relation which thereby becomes the determining factor: This is however an issue which we cannot pursue here in greater detail.<sup>2</sup>

One can find here three distinct assertions and my goal in this paper will be to elucidate the link between them. The first assertion is the simple statement that there is a difference between two periods of modern science. To identify them is an easy task since Heidegger makes it explicit on many occasions that he means the difference between classical physics, which was born in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and contemporary atomic physics, namely quantum mechanics, which appeared in 1925–7. However it is more difficult, and somewhat surprising, to read what Heidegger has to say about the nature of this difference: how are we to understand the modification of the 'objectivity through which nature is presented' and the way 'object and subject disappear' in atomic physics? Finally, it is even more surprising to notice that Heidegger, having stressed the fundamental significance of the difference, states that the difference itself vanishes in the face of something more important: that requisitioning of nature through which modernity receives its determination.

I shall therefore consider each of these three statements one after the other. My first assumption will be that the aim of the course of lectures which Heidegger gave during the Winter of 1935–6 under the title of *Grundfragen der Metaphysik* was to introduce the existence of such a difference between two specific kinds of mathematical physics. This entails a slightly unusual viewpoint which calls for justification. I will attempt therefore to show that the notion that a profound change occurred in the fundamental concepts of physics begins to act upon Heidegger's works precisely in 1935 and to such an extent that it becomes

the starting point of these lectures. This happens because Heidegger puts forward the question of a clarification of the foundation of classical physics as a necessity for the present time. We must be able to take the measure of our own continuing dependence upon these foundations in order to understand the change in our basic position with regard to what is.

## **I The positing of the difference: the question of the thing and the situation intrinsic to the natural sciences**

The text of the 1935 lectures is divided into two parts, one of which is much longer than the other. The first part is called: 'Various ways of questioning about the thing' and serves as a kind of extensive introduction while the second part is devoted to 'Kant's manner of asking about the thing' and proceeds to analyse 'the philosophical determination of the thingness of the thing which Kant has opened up'.<sup>3</sup> It has therefore been considered quite normal to take the 1935 lectures as a course on Kant. Even if attention is paid to Heidegger's insistence on the first law of motion and his much developed analysis of Galileo and Newton, this is interpreted as a consequence of the fact that the lectures address the 'Analytic of principles' in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.<sup>4</sup>

A closer examination of the Introduction reveals however that Heidegger actually proceeds the other way around, and that the decision to comment on Kant's doctrine of objectivity is governed much more directly by the guiding question formulated in the introduction and not with a view to simply completing his exegesis of the *Critique*.

What is this question? It is the 'question of the thing'. The Introduction assembled a number of different attempts to clarify the meaning of this question until a threefold discovery was made in §IX. On the one hand, when, on the basis of immediate experience, we ask 'what is a thing?', the answer runs in terms of a thing as the nucleus around which (or a substratum upon which) many changing qualities are grouped and we regard this as the foundation of our 'natural conception of the world [*natürliche Weltauffassung*]'.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, when we turn to philosophy, we see that this is what philosophy has been saying all along, at least since Plato 'and above all since Aristotle'.<sup>6</sup> Notwithstanding the difference, it is also what Kant stated as a principle: 'all appearance (namely all things for us) contain the permanent (substance) as the object itself and the changeable as its mere determination, that is, the way in which the object exists'.<sup>7</sup> And finally, we see that this conception of the thing yields the essence of truth provided one affirms, as has always been the case, that truth consists in the adequation of words to things, in the conformity of a predicate to a subject. But having made this threefold

discovery on a seemingly sound basis, Heidegger shifts to an entirely new kind of perspective, starting with a simple remark which consists in pointing out that what presents itself as 'natural' is always historical, and that therefore this essential determination of the thing has not been such for all time. There has been a discovery of the thing – a discovery which may have been made at the same time as the discovery of the proposition – and our task is now to question this historical tradition. From the recognition of the task there follows the choice of a 'middle way',<sup>8</sup> represented by the Kantian determination, whose examination is therefore subordinated to the question posed in the Introduction.

But we still have not touched upon the reason why the question of the thing ought to be asked anew. At this point we have to pay attention to two successive indications offered by Heidegger.

In the first place, Heidegger links the *taking up* again of the question of the thing with a 'decision which has to be *taken*': 'We want to contribute to the preparation of a decision which may be formulated as follows: is science the measure of all knowledge or is there a knowledge in which the ground and limit of science and thus its genuine effectiveness are determined?'<sup>9</sup>

Is science the measure of all knowledge? This question is responsible for many characteristic features of the text. Let us mention just two.

It is responsible first of all for the restricted meaning Heidegger accords to the word 'thing'. A thing is 'that which can be touched, reached or seen, that is, what is present-at-hand [*das Vorhandene*]'.<sup>10</sup> The reason why the 1935 lectures privilege this restricted meaning to the exclusion of any other ('In asking "what is a thing?", we shall adhere to the first meaning'<sup>11</sup>) is that science pretends to be true knowledge about what is present at hand. For Heidegger, *Vorhandenheit* is the name we give to the 'mode of being of natural things'.<sup>12</sup>

In the second place, and more importantly, the question mentioned above is responsible for the way Heidegger introduces certain fundamental themes. I shall take the one example of the 'distinction between subject and object', a distinction which may be, as Heidegger points out, 'highly questionable'.<sup>13</sup> The 1935 lectures take up this theme by bringing to light the inner breakdown of classical science's pretence at capturing the essence of the thing. The whole of the aporetic argument in the Introduction is pervaded with the description of this failure; the hopelessness of Cartesian ontology is demonstrated and this demonstration is conducted in the style of Pascal. 'Where are we to get a foothold? The ground slips away from under us'.<sup>14</sup> Why does the ground slip away? Let us suppose that we want to go right to things. Things are always particular. However some things are exactly alike; in this case one can still distinguish them from each other with reference to place and time: 'the essential determination of the thingness of the thing to be this one

[*je dieses*] is grounded in the essence of space and time'.<sup>15</sup> But then what are space and time and how are they linked together? 'Are space and time only a frame for the things, a system of coordinates which we lay out in order to reach sufficiently exact statements about things, or are space and time something else again (cf. Descartes)'?'<sup>16</sup> In other words, what does physical science teach us concerning the thingness of the thing when it gets hold of it analytically by means of space-time co-ordinates? Nothing at all: one is left with the impression that 'space and time are only derivative realms, indifferent towards the things themselves but useful in assigning every thing to its space-time position'.<sup>17</sup> But if the scientific object does not give me the thing, would it be conceivable to find it in the subject, in the ostensivity of the 'this'? However, even on this side we are not be able to learn anything about the kind of truth in which the thing maintains itself.<sup>18</sup> Finally, the reason why I do not get to the thing either through the object or through the subject is because the distinction between subject and object is itself highly questionable, even though it has been a 'generally favoured sphere of retreat for philosophy'.<sup>19</sup> Thus, by way of the internal disintegration of the traditional scientific apprehension of the thing, Heidegger arrives at his fundamental theme regarding the breakdown of the distinction between subject and object.<sup>20</sup>

But why? Why should it be necessary to question the kind of knowledge which science claims to give us since we have long been aware of the difference between the positive sciences and philosophy?

Heidegger now tells us why it will prove necessary to pose this question again even though it appears to have been resolved both by science (the spatio-temporality of the object) and by philosophy (the truth of the thing as the conformity of the predicate to it). It is, as we have seen, because what is 'natural' is also 'and in a special sense, something historical'.<sup>21</sup> To see the thing as the bearer of properties is to be the heirs of an ancient tradition. 'But why not leave this history alone?' since we feel at ease with this tradition and since, in any case, it is not going to make any difference to the functioning of electric trains. Why? For a quite specific reason.

If, for example, we make the effort to think through the inner state of today's natural sciences, non-biological as well as biological; if we also think through the relations which obtain between mechanics and technology to our own existence (*Dasein*), then it becomes clear that knowledge and questioning have reached their limits, limits which demonstrate that, as a matter of fact, an original reference to things is missing.<sup>22</sup>

The decision to take up again the question of the thing in its historicity

(*Geschichtlichkeit*) thus seems to be related to 'the inner state of today's natural sciences'. What is at stake here is clearly something quite different from sheer curiosity about this state of affairs. Rather the question touches upon a change actually taking place in our basic position within the relation to what is. Or rather, says Heidegger 'more cautiously', it touches upon the 'beginning of a transformation', upon a 'change in our ways of questioning and evaluating, of seeing and deciding'. What are we to do? 'To determine the changing basic position within the relation to what is, that is the task of an entire historical period'.<sup>23</sup> Certainly, but at least we should take account of 'what holds us captive and makes us unfree in our experience and determination of things'.<sup>24</sup> What is it that ultimately holds us captive? It is the fact that some fundamental features of modern natural science have become 'a universal way of thinking'. Therefore, we must inquire about our basic relation to nature and, more specifically, about this fact, that a definite conception of the thing has attained 'a unique preeminence', namely, the thing as a 'material concentration of mass in motion within the pure space-time order'.<sup>25</sup> The historical question of the thing leads to suspicions concerning the unshattered pre-eminence of the 'determination of the thing as matter present-at-hand'.<sup>26</sup>

It is thus possible to assume that the 1935 lectures were written in order to stress the need to elucidate the historical character of the determination of the thing which natural science generates when it claims to provide us thereby with a true knowledge of things themselves. Objectivation of the thing in the form of being present-at-hand has made us blind as has also the belief that the scientific *Weltbild* was universal. But which science? It is crucial to note that Heidegger speaks about a decision to be made *because* a fundamental transformation in our position with regard to what is, is making itself known today as a result of what is going on in the natural sciences.

In support of this interpretation of the 1935 lectures it is worth recalling that, some years before, Heidegger had already mentioned the connection between the dissolution of our basic position with regard to what is and the internal state of physics. Let us quote two passages, one from the book on the *Fundamental Problems of Phenomenology* (1927) and the other from the 1930 lectures *On the Essence of Freedom*.

In *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Heidegger stated clearly that there was a far-reaching contrast between philosophy and the positive sciences. Within the realm of the positivist experience of being, the ontological constitution of being is not accessible nor does it 'reach the level of conceptualization'. For this reason, the positive sciences can only 'dream about being'. They are not cognizant of what makes beings what they are, namely, the being relation, even though they do catch a glimpse of all this (without which there could be nothing like unveiling).

Heidegger recalls here the difference Plato saw between geometry and philosophy and he adds the further remark:

The history of all the positive sciences shows that only from time to time do they wake up and open their eyes to the Being of the very beings which they take as the object of their investigations. Today we are in just such a situation. The fundamental concepts of the positive sciences are undergoing a change. In the course of revising them, scientists have been obliged to go back to the original sources from which they were drawn.<sup>27</sup>

The second passage I would like to cite is taken from the 1930 lectures *On the Essence of Freedom*. These lectures are also devoted to Kant, and especially to the connection which Kant establishes between causality and freedom. Section 15 offers a preliminary exposition of what is in question with the problem of causality in the sciences. Heidegger tells us yet again that 'the natural sciences and history have become more problematic than ever in their internal essence' and that 'there has never been a greater disproportion between the results regularly obtained and the uncertainty and obscurity which surrounds both the most fundamental and the most simple concepts and questions'.<sup>28</sup> Heidegger supports this statement with a discussion of causality in the 'new physical theories', a discussion founded on quotations from P. Jordan and M. Born, from which it transpires that 'the processional character of material processes has become problematic'.<sup>29</sup> In other words, the time of physics is no longer what it was. And here again one finds a reference to 'a shattering and an effective displacement of our entire being' with regard to which we

do not have the right (as philosophers) to neglect the new way of raising questions in contemporary physics by reducing them to an empirical material. For it could well be that this material gives us an indication of a novel and essential determination of *nature as such*.<sup>30</sup>

What is the meaning of these two passages? It is that we are caught up in a transformation and a shattering of our basic position within being such that we cannot overlook the new determination of nature in the natural sciences – and that the natural sciences themselves have opened their eyes to the nature of the beings with which they are concerned. The 1927 and 1930 lectures thus anticipate the 1935 way of questioning: *what are we to make of the transformation of the thing into an object now that physics seems to call for a totally new way of determining nature?*

These two passages make it easier to understand why mathematical physics is given so much importance in the 1935 lectures, especially in

§V from the second part of the book where we find the Heideggerian version of §9 of the second part of *Krisis* (written about the same time). Heidegger uses very strong language to describe the decisive character he ascribes to the rise of modern science: 'a mutation of our *Dasein*', 'a unique passion . . . which finds its like only among the Greeks', 'a capacity to 'hold out in this mode of questioning',<sup>31</sup> 'a liberation', 'a new experience and formation of freedom itself'.<sup>32</sup> The greatness and superiority' of natural science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, says Heidegger, was due to the fact that all the scientists were philosophers. Similarly today,

where genuine and creative research is being done, the situation is no different from that of three hundred years ago. . . . Niels Bohr and Heisenberg think in a thoroughly philosophical way, thanks to which they are capable of initiating new ways of questioning and, above all, of holding out in the questionable.<sup>33</sup>

In other words, contemporary atomic physics could represent something of the same order as that which took place with the birth of modern natural science. It would engender, or reflect, a mutation of our *Dasein*. Provided that this 'same order' is not a simple continuation but rather proceeds from a more subtle analogy, the analogy which pertains between two fundamental ways of questioning about the mode of being of entities. The sciences awaken from their dream.

But since what is repeated is in reality, as we have seen, quite different, what is required by contemporary physics is in no way a new *Critique of Pure Reason*. Heidegger's intention in writing the 1935 lectures was certainly not to promote, even for the future, the need to take up again the Kantian question: *quid juris*. How then are we to understand his remarks if we concede that they do not proceed from simple curiosity and therefore do not represent the prolegomena for a foundational programme? I shall temporarily avoid this difficulty by contenting myself with a comparison: Heidegger's position here can be compared with that of Aristotle.

Aristotle – as we read in §19 of *Grundprobleme* – was the last of the great philosophers who was capable of vision and, even more important, who possessed the strength and patience needed to compel research to go back to the phenomena, to what is visibly given in the phenomena, by entirely disregarding wild and empty speculations, no matter how popular they might be.<sup>34</sup>

## II The modification of objectivity in contemporary atomic physics

Let us then concede that Heidegger possesses Aristotle's strength and patience. What was he likely to find by 'going back to the phenomena' and by questioning 'the inner state of natural science?' My second assumption will be that, in the early 1930s, Heidegger becomes aware of the fact that quantum physics is very different from the kind of physics which he has dealt with in his *Habilitationsschrift* in 1915, even though it comes out of the latter. For quantum physics involves a wholly new conception of the relation between time and motion. It is precisely this difference that Heidegger will call a 'transformation of the objectivity through which nature manifests itself'.

Shortly before 1935, Heidegger's attention was most probably drawn by a paper published by Werner Heisenberg in 1934 in the journal *Die Naturwissenschaften* under the title of 'Wandlungen der Grundlagen der exakten Naturwissenschaft in jungster Zeit'.<sup>35</sup> This paper had aroused wide interest – due also to the fact that Heisenberg had just received the Nobel prize – and was to provide the title of Heisenberg's first collection of non-technical papers.<sup>36</sup> Heidegger also met Heisenberg in the fall of 1935. As Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker recalls: 'Someone suggested that Viktor von Weizsäcker and Werner Heisenberg should discuss the question of the introduction of the subject into the natural sciences in the presence of Heidegger; so we became Heidegger's guests for a few days'.<sup>37</sup> As Viktor, who was Carl Friedrich's uncle, was a biologist, it seems plausible to assume that this conversation was the occasion for the phrase quoted above: 'the inner state of the natural sciences, non-biological as well as biological'.

In many respects, Heisenberg's paper prepares the way for the 1935 lectures.

In the first place, Heisenberg affirms the difference between classical physics and quantum mechanics by stressing the fact that classical physics was a physics of the thing:

Classical physics was built on some fundamental presuppositions, which seemed to provide a self-evident starting point for all exact natural science and which therefore did not require any demonstration: physics dealt with the behaviour of things in space and with their evolution in time.

From there, one was led to the tacit assumption that there was 'an objective course of events in space and time independent of observation', and indeed still further on to the concept of an 'objective reality' based upon the interpretation of space and time as an immutable arrangement of things. Finally, the ultimate consequence of such a tacit universaliz-



ation of a region of experience (*Erfahrungsbereich*) was the construction of a scientific image of the world (*naturwissenschaftliche Weltbild*).

Heisenberg goes on to say that the primary consequence of the theory of Relativity and, even more so, of quantum mechanics, has been the breakdown of these presuppositions. The radical transformation of these space-time concepts and of the concept of motion has thus provided a 'new possibility for thought'. The question is whether physicists 'ought to renounce the very idea of an objective time-scale'. Heisenberg answers this question in the affirmative and mentions that, in consequence, the very notion of 'objective spatio-temporal processes' has become meaningless. What this means is that one now has to call in question the very way in which classical physics used to identify the thing with the object. The fact that quantum mechanics does not deal with objective spatio-temporal processes amounts to the recognition that it is no longer possible to perceive a phenomenon along the lines of what used formerly to be called 'objectivity', that is, the phenomenon as it lies there in front of me, undisturbed by observation and such that I, the knowing subject, have the ability to construct a representation of it in ordinary space and time.

This failure of the basic presuppositions of classical physics leads, in Heisenberg's view, to the paradoxical consequence that it is now impossible to develop a *Weltbild* or a *Weltanschauung* based on the kind of knowledge furnished by physical science. If we consider how these new dispositions impact upon 'the human situation', we have to conclude that we must 'replace the twentieth century *Weltbild* with something different'.<sup>38</sup> In other words, we must now leave the Cartesian *cogito* to adopt the itinerant stance of a Columbus. We have to 'have the courage to abandon entirely the lands we have known up to now'.

Turning to the meaning of such a transformation from the viewpoint of a 'theory of knowledge', Heisenberg stresses the need to clarify the a priori character of the Kantian forms of intuition and the categories. By changing the structure of physical theory, contemporary physics has undoubtedly overturned the very basis of this comprehension. However, 'the question of determining how to judge to what an extent this idea still remains fruitful in those more extended spheres which were essential to Kant has not yet been thoroughly discussed from within this new perspective'.

With this brief description of the main arguments contained in Heisenberg's paper, one can get some insight into the profound affinity which prevails between Heisenberg's question and the perspective adopted by the 1935 lectures. In particular, the connection between the impossible *Weltanschauung* and the suggestion that Kantian criticism has become problematic in a new way is especially important. If one recalls that, from Heilmholtz to Planck, the 'philosophically-minded physics' in

Germany has been essentially and explicitly Kantian in inspiration, it becomes clear that any German physics would interpret as a conceptual revolution the suggestion that the foundations of Kant's theory of knowledge ought to be re-examined.<sup>39</sup> The 1935 lectures take up this very suggestion, since Heidegger attempts to establish a connection between a critical examination of the Kantian doctrine of objectivity and an historical evaluation of the universalization of forms of thought derived from natural science.

For Heidegger, the meeting with Heisenberg certainly involved coming to terms with an extremely powerful, though aporetic, conception of the transformation of objectivity, and of the perception of Nature in atomic physics. Before moving on to the most fundamental level of this confrontation, the questioning of the essence of motion, I shall introduce a point of comparison by referring to a text which Heidegger had written long before, namely his *Habilitationsschrift* of 1915 'Der Zeitbegriff in der Geschichtswissenschaft',<sup>40</sup> a text which is hardly 'Heideggerian' in as much as it antecedes by quite some time the discovery of that temporality which belongs to Dasein, but whose influence pervades many of Heidegger's works thereafter in a variety of ways.

Though this is not apparent from the title, in the first part of this text Heidegger deals with the concept of time in the *physical* sciences. The central question is that of defining 'along what path we may most surely obtain knowledge of the logical structure of the concept of time in the historical sciences' and proceeding from there of the concept of 'time in general'. This path has to be a regressive one. One must go back from 'the structure of the concept of time in history to its function in the history of science' and this function must be rendered intelligible on the basis of what the 'history of science aims at'. Heidegger tells us that we should start from the 'science of history as a fact and study there the function of the concept of time, and on that basis go on to determine its logical structure'. But in order to render this clarification still more precise, it would be as well to follow this path in the first place with the case of natural science. In other words, it behoves us to determine first the objectives of natural science, then the function of the concept of time, before finishing up with the structure of physical time.

With regard to the aim of natural science, Heidegger asks: what is that fundamental tendency in physics which has revealed itself ever more significantly from Galileo up to the present time? This fundamental tendency was already exhibited in the new method which consisted in uniting a multiplicity of phenomena by way of a law.<sup>41</sup> But 'modern physics did more'. In the course of its further development it accomplished another essential move in the direction of a unification of the objects of physics,<sup>42</sup> with the result that we now find ourselves confronting only two main branches of physical science: mechanics, as the

theory of matter, and electrodynamics, as the theory of ether. This division also, according to Heidegger, created a 'deep conflict' between the 'mechanical *Weltanschauung*' and the 'electrodynamical *Weltanschauung*'. However, in Planck's view – and Heidegger quotes extensively from Planck's book of 1910<sup>43</sup> – the concepts of space, time and substance which serve as the fundamental concepts for mechanics are just as essential in electrodynamics, and therefore it is possible to hope for a reconciliation of these two branches of physics within a general dynamics. Heidegger tells us that this indicates very clearly what the aim of physical science might be. 'This aim is the unity of the physical *Weltbild*,<sup>44</sup> the reduction of all phenomena to the fundamental mathematical laws of a general dynamics, to the laws of motion of a definable mass-point.'

But now, what function does the concept of time have in this physics? Since it is the aim of physics to exhibit the law-like character of motion with the utmost generality and since motion takes place 'in' time – whatever this 'in' actually means – motion and time have to 'cohere' together in some way or other. They have to display that 'affinity' which Galileo used to talk about. Such an affinity appears through the essential part played by the process of measurement. In order to measure the position of a mass-point in space one has to assume that there is a fixed point and then one has to set up three co-ordinate axes. In order to analyse the motion of a point along a curb it is necessary to associate each second marked off on the clock with three measures, that is, three numbers which give the position of point *P* at instant *t*. 'Let us now give *t* all subsequent values; in as much as they are continuous functions of *t*, the co-ordinates will provide complete knowledge of all the positions. This knowledge of all the successive positions we call movement.' The intuited qualities of phenomena are thus deleted (*ausgelöscht*) and transformed (*gehoben*) into the mathematical. The function of the time concept is to allow for such a process by making possible the very act of measurement.

Thus the structure of the time concept becomes visible. Time acts in physics as an independent variable which guarantees the uniform flux of continuous motion. The only relation that exists between time points is that they are arranged in a successive order which coagulates time itself and makes it something which can be measured in the same way as a surface. 'Time has been turned into a homogeneous arrangement of positions, into a scale, into a parameter.' Time has been thought in terms of space.

By comparison, Heidegger finds a widely different view of the situation when he reads papers by Born or Jordan or when he talks to Heisenberg.<sup>45</sup> The new view breaks with the essential features mentioned above concerning both the aim of physics and the function of the concept of time. Consequently, in the 1935 lectures, Heidegger follows Heisenberg

in stating that 'it is no longer possible to find a foundational unity in the sciences and that such a unity is neither needed nor even in question'.<sup>46</sup> And so when Heidegger takes up again, with a view to developing further than in 1915, his analysis of the first law of motion, he takes care to specify that he is talking about 'Newtonian physics'<sup>47</sup> – whereas the 1915 *Habilitationsschrift* referred to physics in general.

Why? Why has the emergence of quantum theory transformed the fundamental concepts of physics to such an extent that Heisenberg is bound to say that an atom can no longer be described as a material thing situated in space with a definite evolution in time, and moreover that objective space and time no longer exist and that the very idea of a *Weltbild* has become anachronistic?

Many different aspects of quantum theory ought to be taken into consideration at this point, like the disappearance of the independence of the object, the non-neutrality of the subject or the way classical physics, the physics of the thing, is retroactively referred to ordinary language. Many of these features are consonant with the 1935 lectures; we may mention for instance the fundamental iconoclasm of physics, its renunciation of images; or the fact that, from 1925 on, quantum mechanics identifies 'classical' physics with an extrapolation of the intuitions incorporated in ordinary language (in Heidegger's words: the thing is defined through the essence of the proposition), while the quantum object itself remains inexpressible in this language; or finally the fact that the Copenhagen interpretation comments quite directly on the disappearance of the mirror relationship between subject and object. However, I shall restrict myself here to one feature which seems to be the most fundamental, namely, the requisitioning of the traditional determination of the essence of motion.

Quantum mechanics only emerged once physicists abandoned the classical concept of motion and went back to the more basic level of kinematics. No science forsakes a fundamental concept without being forced to do so. Therefore it took twenty-five years for physicists to admit that it was impossible to maintain the classical concept of motion. In 1924–5, that is, at the end of just such a twenty-five-year period, atomic physics was characterized by an absolute conceptual gap between the new data and classical concepts, and it became clear that the most primitive concepts would have to be redefined. Thus in July 1925 Pauli wrote to Bohr that 'it is not the concept of energy that has to be transformed first of all but rather the concepts of motion and force'.<sup>48</sup> Bohr also confided to the experimentalist H. Geiger that 'the difficulties we are encountering make it entirely impossible to maintain the ordinary spatio-temporal description of phenomena'.<sup>49</sup>

In 1925, the quantum mechanics created by Heisenberg, Born, Jordan, Pauli and Bohr might be briefly described as a theory which provided a

law for the motion of an electron in the hydrogen atom,<sup>50</sup> the algebraic formulation of which established a correspondence between infinite matrices and those classical quantities which were a function of time. In addition it was also necessary to give up applying such classical concepts as position, velocity, trajectory, energy and causality<sup>51</sup> to the electron. The 'three-man paper' by Heisenberg, Born and Jordan, entitled 'Zur Quantenmechanik II', states that 'the motions of electrons cannot be described in terms of ordinary concepts of space and time; a characteristic feature of the new theory is the modification it imposes upon kinematics as well as upon mechanics'.<sup>52</sup>

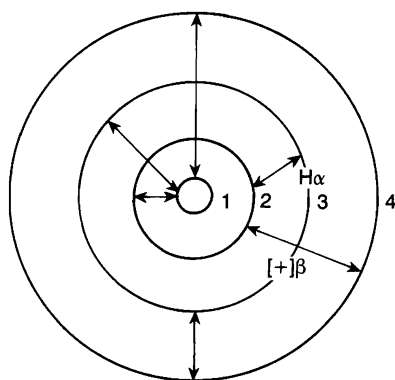
Why was such an abandonment of the classical concepts necessary?

In the first place, as indicated in Planck's statements, quoted by Heidegger in 1915, atomic physics sought to unite mechanics and electrodynamics. The crucial problem was to understand the inner constitution of the atom, once it was admitted that this constitution was essentially electric, i.e., the atom was composed of a definite number of electrons.<sup>53</sup> The idea was to give an account of the existing knowledge about the atom, its chemical and physical properties, which would be based on a mechanical law of motion for electrons, namely on an electrodynamics. Ideally, one would obtain a planetary atomic model. Thus the unification of sky and earth, already accomplished by modern physics in the seventeenth century would be achieved over again on the side of the other infinite.

In 1913, the so-called Bohr atom already illustrated the failure of such a hope and demonstrated that it was impossible to establish a unique lawfulness for all motions. The Bohr atom was like a drawing that repudiated its own striving toward figurative representation.

The Bohr model for the atom brought about a recognition and synthesis of a given number of restrictive conditions: (a) the electron contradicted electromagnetism since the atom was not constantly losing energy (in spite of the accelerated motion of the electron); (b) the electron contradicted mechanics since, though there obviously existed a nucleus and therefore some gravitational structure, the atom was nevertheless stable within collisions (there was a fundamental state). Consequently: (c) the only thing that one could write down was an equation for discontinuous energy transfer. One could have no knowledge whatsoever of what actually 'happened' between two stationary states. The very notion of an evolution of the motion of the electron was deprived of meaning.

Finally, 'in desperation', Bohr was led in 1924 to renounce any kind of representation of atomic phenomena in space and time. Matrix mechanics was able to give a partial solution to these difficulties only because Heisenberg, as Bohr used to say, 'got rid of the classical determinations of motion'.<sup>54</sup> The classical analytic conception of motion, as the description of a continuous curb in the space of ordinary geometry, was



Bohr model for hydrogen atoms in simplified form  
(with circles instead of ellipses)

Diagram taken from H. A. Kramers and H. Holst, *Das Atom und die Bohrsche Theorie seines Baues* (Berlin: Springer, 1925). Bohr for his part was opposed to any figurative representation of his atomic model.

Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4: correspond to the stationary states of the atom. Arrows represent the spectral rays of the hydrogen atom. Circles, or stationary orbits, indicate the discontinuous series of the values given by the energy of the atomic system. Between orbits, the electron makes a transition or a 'quantum leap', which cannot be determined.

replaced by a quite different formalism and one had to let go of the notion of a trajectory. The concept of an object changing places also turned into an empty concept, since one could only calculate the probability that a given physical system would be found in a certain state in the spatial configuration.

Given the situation of physical science as Heidegger discovers it between 1927 and 1935, phenomena cannot be thought any more along the lines of the fundamental concepts of traditional ontology: permanence, continuity, substantiality, distinguishability. . . . Heidegger acknowledges this fundamental transformation and he cannot but view it against the background of the history of Western metaphysics. The fact that quantum mechanics conceives of 'nature' otherwise than through an underlying presence has to lead to a questioning of the Aristotelian *Problemstellung* of οὐσία, closely connected with the determination of time as the measure of motion.

Indeed, since Aristotle, the 'paradigmatic mode of being for ontology', namely, the kind of being which serves to 'decipher the meaning of being as such' was Nature, as an underlying being-present.<sup>55</sup> With regard to the essence of motion, 'philosophy has not progressed one single step since Aristotle'<sup>56</sup> and with regard to the question of the Being of being, the so-called 'return to the Ego' in modern philosophy has only led to the reinforcement of this same interpretation, since Dasein was thought

of as *res cogitans* on the model of *res extensa*. Even Kant, though he understands perfectly well that it is impossible to conceive of the 'I' along these lines,<sup>57</sup> maintains the privilege of an underlying being to such an extent that he always defines nature as the object of mathematical physics and that his concept of the thing-in-itself implicitly reasserts the 'traditional ontology of an underlying presence'.<sup>58</sup> Kant 'fails to question the thingness of the thing'.<sup>59</sup> Is it not precisely Heidegger's own discovery to have found in this kind of being that we ourselves are a mode of being which is that of existence and not of an underlying presence? But if such is the case would it not be plausible to find a 'parallel' discovery on the side of physics – of a physics which keeps its eyes open and which questions the essence of motion and therefore also the essence of Being – a discovery which would lead us to determine nature otherwise than as the set of subsisting entities? How are we to think the apparently final repudiation (obvious 'in the most recent developments in atomic physics') of the connection between permanence, *extensio* and substance?

### III The difference vanishes: atomic physics and modernity

Heidegger does not however ask this question. For him, the difference between 'classical' physics and 'contemporary' physics is certainly decisive and touches upon the 'objectivity which manifests itself in nature' because it promotes a new conception of time. Still, this difference vanishes. Its suppression is easily seen in the style of most of the passages in which it is mentioned, passages which mark a contrast between the decisive character of the difference and the assertion that, for all that, it counts for nothing in the face of something even more essential. Why?

At this point it seems obvious that Heidegger, who was dealing in 1935 with a 'decision to be taken', makes his decision in the 1938 lecture, 'Die Zeit des Weltbildes', in which he analyses the meaning of the expression 'modern times'.

What is modernity? Heidegger enumerates five essential features of modernity but he only pays attention to the first: 'we shall restrict the question to the first phenomenon mentioned, namely science' – though Heidegger actually only takes mathematical physics into consideration. He then states that it is his aim to 'touch upon the metaphysical foundations of science in as much as it is *modern science*'.<sup>60</sup>

What, then, is modern science? It is characterized in the first place by the fact that research (*Forschung*) fastens upon one specific region of being. Here Heidegger takes up his former remarks about the mathematical project of classical physics: nature is defined as the set of spatio-temporal motions of various centres of gravity, where motion means change of place. Modern science is also characterized by the fact that

its method seeks to fix variations within a framework of constant changes, i.e., by furnishing scientific laws governing processes. Here the 1938 lecture makes extensive use of the 1915 *Habilitationsschrift*. Finally, a third feature of modern science consists in the organization of research in institutes and the birth of a new type of man, 'the researcher engaged in research programmes' rather than in questioning.

What conception of being is proper to this modern conception of science? Being has to become an object. Nature has to be 'forced' and History has to stand 'still'.<sup>61</sup> Also, the search for objectivity obeys a conception of truth which identifies truth with the certainty of representation. In other words, following Descartes, man must become the subject. What follows from these two transformations? The formation of a *Weltbild*. 'With the triumph of the *Weltbild*, there follows a decisive assignment with respect to being in totality. The being of being is henceforward sought and discovered in the being-represented of being'.<sup>62</sup> Instead of talking about the philosophical conceptions of modernity, it would be better to say that modernity is defined by the invention of new conceptions of the world. 'Now the world as such becomes a mental construction. This is what characterizes and distinguishes the reign of modernity'.<sup>63</sup>

Let us return to what was said earlier about the specificity of atomic physics in Heidegger's view. The object disappears, the subject disappears, and what emerges is the question of their relation. It follows therefrom that it is no longer possible to form a *Weltbild* based on atomic physics. Being is no longer conceived in accordance with laws governing change within a spatio-temporal process. Strictly speaking, *if modernity is what Heidegger said it was in 1938, quantum physics does not belong to modern physics*. This is not however the conclusion Heidegger draws when he repeatedly confirms that nuclear physics, or particle physics, remains within the realm of modern physics.

But perhaps this contradiction is only apparent. If quantum physics remains within modern science, this has to be because a crucial issue remains unchanged, despite the revision in the fundamental concepts and in the essence of motion. This crucial issue is the problem of technique, namely, the problem of the calculative projection of nature. There are at least three reasons why Heidegger wanted to insist upon this point and therefore decided to retain atomic physics within the realm of modernity.

A first reason can readily be seen in the very interpretation which Bohr and Heisenberg tried to work out. The major thesis characteristic of this interpretation is that in quantum physics one had to make use of classical concepts because there are no specific quantum concepts that might represent the essence of the object. No quantum concepts means: no ontology in the traditional manner, no transparency of the 'quantons' relative to ordinary language. All the same, one has to do physics and



to communicate the results of experiments (traces of electrons in a cloud chamber, impacts on photographic plates, etc.). But one should be aware that concepts such as these only serve as metaphors. Consequently, the situation remains unchanged. Language is employed to fix the variation of representations and remains within the sphere of the calculable.

A second reason has to do with Heidegger's pessimism concerning the readiness of science to stay the course. Already in 1927 Heidegger wrote that the awakening of natural science would not last: The sciences have begun to dream again. . . . One cannot but be ill at ease, seated on a powder barrel and knowing that the fundamental concepts in question are only worn-out opinions and that everyone wants peace and quiet'.<sup>64</sup> This was in 1927; and indeed as soon as the fundamental problems of quantum mechanics had been solved, the only physicists to remain seated 'on the powder barrels' were the founders of the theory. Other physicists went on operating as in 'modern physics', looking for ultimate components, breaking up, dividing, confident that they would find the things themselves, calculating, constructing an image of the world. Today, more than ever before, we find theories proposing some 'grand unification', theories striving for the unity of a physical *Weltbild*.

The third reason is that Heidegger himself certainly wanted to take seriously the question: how are we to think through the present situation in the natural sciences? I said before, apropos of the 1935 lectures, that Heidegger refers the difference between the two physics to a transformation of our basic position within what is. How are we to determine what is essential? Many roads are open and still remain so even today, provided one pays special attention to the locus where the most violent conflicts over quantum mechanics still abound. Should we look for an ontology which would be the contemporary equivalent of the Cartesian ontology? Or should we not rather turn our attention to theories of knowledge, in the manner of the neo-Kantians? Or should we be primarily concerned with what affects us most directly, that is to say, modern science, a science which, ever more in the 'atomic age', is directed toward the ideal of an appropriation of Nature and of man? By addressing the question of technology, in as much as technology already formed the essence of modern science at the time of the emergence of mathematical physics, Heidegger chooses the third road. Between the seventeenth century and Heisenberg's physics what disappears in fact is the 'Cartesian' ontology, not the examination of being from the standpoint of calculation. Therefore, whatever the force of our questioning with regard to the objectivity of nature, this questioning (assuming always that it remains alive) is less *urgent* for Heidegger than that which bears upon the persistence of modernity in our life.

And so we bring to an end the detour announced at the beginning, that is, the detour involved in the analysis of interpretative problems

connected with those passages in which Heidegger discusses the difference between classical physics and atomic physics. This detour has allowed us to suggest that one of the most important motives underlying the composition of the lectures of 1935 was the need to bring to light the Kantian objectification of the thing in order that we should be in a position to know what it is exactly that we now have to give up. Heidegger regarded the difference between the two physics as of decisive importance in the history of metaphysics since he interpreted it as a modification of the objectivity of nature which was previously conceived along the lines of subsisting being. At about the same time, Cassirer, the Vienna Circle, even Husserl himself also tried to understand the philosophical significance of quantum mechanics. However, Heidegger went further by abolishing the very difference which he had at first considered so decisive. My hypothesis is that the predominance of technology in Heidegger's work dates from the moment when he decides to say that physics, no longer capable of producing an ontology in the traditional sense, now leaves us completely free to decide what we want to make of nature. From the standpoint of any attempt to comprehend Heidegger's work, this hypothesis has the advantage of possibly resuscitating – and this is all I have tried to do – an angle on the genesis of this decision which has not hitherto been closely examined. This may not only help us to clarify the genesis of Heidegger's own approach but, more importantly, it may help us to understand those philosophical aspects of quantum theory which are linked to the collapse of the very foundations of classical physics.

Translated by Christopher Macann

## Notes

### References and Abbreviations

In the notes for this article, references to the following works have been given in the following form: first, the abbreviation of the title, then the page of the German edition.

'Der Zeitbegriff in der Geschichtswissenschaft', *Habilitationsschrift* (1915), in *Frühe Schriften* (FS) (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1972), pp. 355–76.

*Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (Gr. Ph.), *Gesamtausgabe* (GA) 24.

*Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit. Einleitung in der Philosophie* (WF), GA 31.

*Die Frage nach dem Ding. Zu Kant's Lehre von den transzendentalen Grundsätzen* (FD) (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1962).

'Die Zeit des Weltbildes', a lecture from 1938 given under the title 'Die Begründung des neuzeitlichen Weltbildes durch die Metaphysik' in *Holzwege* (H) (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1950).

'Wissenschaft und Besinnung', in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (VA) (Pfullingen: Neske, 1954).

1 Published as 'La physique de Heidegger', *Etudes philosophiques*, 3 (1990), 289–311.

2 VA, 61.

3 FD, 42.

4 The tendency to see the 1935 lectures as a course 'on' Kant with a general introduction added at the beginning seems to be associated with the idea that the lectures which Heidegger had formerly given on Kant exhibited an essential deficiency since they did not comment on the 'Analytic of principles'; instead, Heidegger had privileged the 'Transcendental aesthetics' and the 'Schematism' and he had stubbornly refused to admit that the *Critique of Pure Reason* could be a theory of knowledge. In fact however, a new perspective on Kant cannot be found in the 1935 lectures. Heidegger repeats himself frequently and repetitions are even to be found in a comparison of the 1935 lectures with the 1930 book on the essence of freedom, where we already find an analysis of the 'Analogies of experience'. Moreover, and this is the critical point, the confrontation with the 'metaphysical centre' of Kant's work is constantly referred by Heidegger to the leading question of the Introduction. For similar reasons it seems unsatisfactory to account for the 1935 lectures on the basis of a more or less explicit competition with Husserl who had been concerned with these issues not only in the *Ideen* but also at the beginning of the 1930s. Certainly, a comparison would be most fruitful. For instance the lectures given by Husserl in Belgrade in 1936 (also *Krisis*, 1–27) deal with the interpretation of the beginnings of modern science and modern philosophy and with the meaning of Kant's philosophy from the standpoint of an 'historical and critical regressive meditation' intended to 'prepare the way for a decision.' However, Heidegger does not, in my opinion, concentrate on these themes simply on account of his confrontation with Husserl but also in virtue of his own interpretation of the contemporary situation in the natural sciences in as much as this situation invites a reassessment of certain questions which he had already taken into consideration in the 1935 lectures.

5 FD, 25.

6 FD, 26.

7 *ibid.* Heidegger quotes Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (A 182).

8 FD, 42.

9 FD, 8.

10 FD, 4.

11 FD, 5. Heidegger distinguishes between different meanings of the word 'thing'. One can think of something in general 'every affair or transaction, something that is in this or that condition, the things that happen in the world, occurrences, events'. Or one can use the word 'thing' as in philosophy, having in mind, for instance, the Kantian distinction between the 'thing-in-itself' and the 'thing-for-us' or more generally thinking of anything that is a something and not nothing. Or one can just point to the meaning of the word in ordinary language. A thing is a piece of wood, a rock, a knife, an apple, spruce, lizard, wasp . . . it can be small or big, inanimate or animate, useful or just something to be looked at. But it will not be a number, or a word. It will not be said that the number 5 is a thing and everyone distinguishes between the word 'house' and the thing house. This last meaning is the restricted meaning which Heidegger takes into consideration.

12 *Gr. Ph.*, 36.

13 *FD*, 21.

14 *FD*, 21.

15 *FD*, 21.

16 *FD*, 13. Here we have again the piece of chalk already mentioned by Heidegger on other occasions and especially in the 1930 lectures on the essence of freedom, relative to his commentary of Book  $\Theta$  of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Indeed the piece of chalk features here like a pastiche of the Cartesian piece of wax: let us break the chalk, Heidegger says, let us dissolve the chalk. Where is matter? Space is not in the chalk nor is it outside the chalk. And where is time to be found on the clock?

17 *FD*, 13.

18 Heidegger does not emphasize the problem of the subject here. One also notes his elimination of any analysis of instrumentality. The standpoint of Dasein certainly does not dominate. It is worth recalling that the 'turning point' in 1929 amounted to a decision to account directly for the historicity of Being. However, I would also like to emphasize the way in which Heidegger gets rid of the perspective of the analytic of Dasein to the benefit of a critical examination of the traditional metaphysical foundations of science.

19 *FD*, 21.

20 Heidegger frequently states that his approach in the 1935 lectures is independent of any presuppositions either about science or about philosophy. He 'forgets' all his former conceptions of what metaphysics might be and simply defines metaphysics as this procedure which entails falling into a well, a procedure which allows him to bring to light a 'pure' question: what is the thingness of the thing?

21 *FD*, 30.

22 *FD*, 31.

23 *FD*, 38.

24 *FD*, 38.

25 *FD*, 38.

26 *FD*, 39.

27 *Gr. Ph.*, 72ff.

28 *WF*, 141.

29 *WF*, 142.

30 *WF*, 147.

31 *FD*, 50.

32 *FD*, 75.

33 *FD*, 51.

34 *Gr. Ph.*, 329, see also *ibid.*, 97: 'The methodological maxim of phenomenology is to refuse to run away from the riddle of phenomena, or to try to get rid of it by way of a theoretical pronouncement; rather the riddle must be accentuated.'

35 *Die Naturwissenschaften*, 22 (1934), 669-75.

36 Up till then, Heisenberg had addressed a more restricted audience, namely, the physicists who were immediately concerned with the problem of the interpretation of quantum theory. Heidegger does not quote this 1934 paper by Heisenberg in the 1935 lectures but he frequently refers to it in later writings.

37 C. F. von Weizsäcker, 'Rencontres sur quatre décennies' in *Martin Heidegger* (Paris: Ed. de l'Herne, 1983), 156.

38 At this point in his argument Heisenberg pays considerable attention to the historical analysis of the gradual rigidification of the image-of-the-world which followed the liberation represented by the discovery in the sixteenth century of

a new realm of reality (*Wirklichkeit*) and by the establishment in the seventeenth century of deductive philosophical systems like those of Descartes and Spinoza. From the very first, he adds, these systems forgot that any knowledge of Nature as a machine was itself a product of man's representative power. Later this way of thinking became extended universally on the basis of the limited sphere of rationality proper to classical physics. This entailed a separation between science and the other aspects of life and we have now become prisoners of such a division.

39 Far from being strict Kantians, Helmholtz, Hertz or Boltzmann considered various local transformations of the concept of representation (*Vorstellung*) and of its different specifications. But the touchstone of criticism had remained, namely, the programme of a metaphysics of nature based on universal laws of thought which were partly derived from the 'universality and necessity' of the laws of nature exhibited in Newtonian physics.

40 *FS*, 355.

41 Heidegger exemplifies this by a thorough examination of the law of gravitation in Galileo's work and he emphasizes the fact that this approach abstracts from any considerations relative to specific bodies.

42 On the one hand, says Heidegger, physics incorporated acoustics and the theory of heat into mechanics. On the other hand, it incorporated optics, magnetism and the theory of thermal radiation into electrical theory (Fourier-Boltzmann and Maxwell-Planck). It is worth recalling that Planck's 'theory of thermal radiation' (1900) was the occasion for the introduction into physics of the idea of a discontinuity in the exchange of energy – even though this was not Planck's intention. This move is always represented as the birth of quantum mechanics.

43 Max Planck, *Acht Vorlesungen über theoretische Physik* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1910). At this time Planck was desperately trying to resist the growing tendency to introduce discontinuity into the structure of radiation, to the point of proposing 'Planck's second theory' in accordance with which only the mechanism for the absorption of radiation by the atom is to be regarded as a discontinuous process, the emission itself being treated as continuous.

44 This expression is the very title of a famous paper by Planck, 'Die Einheit des physikalischen Weltbildes', *Physikalische Zeitschrift*, 10 (1909), 62–75, in which Planck sharply criticizes the ideas of Ernst Mach.

45 This might seem surprising, first, since in 1915 Heidegger adopts Planck's position and also quotes Einstein. However, it should be mentioned that in many respects quantum mechanics was developed in opposition to Planck's views whereas Relativity theory, for its part, remained a 'classical' theory from the standpoint of the description of phenomena. In 1930, Heisenberg remarks in his Chicago lectures that 'Relativity theory still meets the traditional demands of science since it allows us to divide the world into subject and object and to apply the principle of causality'.

46 *FD*, 51.

47 *FD*, 67.

48 Letter from Pauli to Bohr dated 27 July 1925, in *W. Pauli Wissenschaftliche Briefwechsel* (Berlin: Springer, 1979), 232.

49 Letter from Bohr to Geiger dated 21 April 1925 in N. Bohr, *Collected Works* (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company), V, 350.

50 Hydrogen has only one electron. All attempts to formulate laws of motion for atoms of more than one electron failed up to the 1927 synthesis of matrix mechanics (Heisenberg-Born-Jordan) and wave mechanics (Schrödinger).

51 Causality is here defined in connection with the formalism of differential

equations as the possibility of linking together, by means of continuous laws, a set of numbers describing the initial conditions of a system and another set of numbers describing its final conditions.

52 M. Born, W. Heisenberg and P. Jordan, 'Zur Quantenmechanik II', *Zeitschrift für Physik*, 35 (1926), 558.

53 Since the 1890s, the atom lost the legitimacy of its Greek name since it was now discovered to be divisible. Moreover, the inner structure of the atom was thought to be electrical. In other words, it was assumed that the atom was pervaded by positive and negative electricity. Physicists possessed three kinds of data about atoms: data relating to the chemical and mechanical stability of the atom, and spectroscopic data, that is, photographs of the radiation emitted by atoms in an excited state. The question was, how to derive this data from a law of motion of the constitutive components of the atom, that is, the electrons. Electromagnetic theory was expected to provide a dynamic which would make it possible to account for all the new experimental data.

54 Quantum mechanics was essentially worked out in the course of three years – 1925, 1926, 1927. In 1927, Bohr suggested the formulation of new conditions for the description of phenomena in physical space. While classical physics went on connecting representations in space and time with the principle of causality, quantum mechanics was forced to disjoin them. In other words, if the conditions for the definition of a system were fixed by describing its initial state (with the help of the  $\psi$  function) any possibility of representing the final state in space and time (there will only be a probability of any such representation) had to be given up. On the other hand, if it was the conditions for the observation of the system which were fixed, then the indeterminacy conditions forbade any simultaneous knowledge of the classical parameters (for instance, position and momentum) – which would then make it impossible to apply the principle of causality. The choice is thus between 'deterministic' equations which do not attempt to describe the actual reality of the system and conditions for actual observation of the system which have to forego any deterministic description. Nothing of this kind is to be found in ordinary space and time.

55 *Gr. Ph.*, 173.

56 *WF*, 31.

57 *Gr. Ph.*, 209.

58 *ibid.*

59 *FD*, 100.

60 *H*, 70.

61 *H*, 80.

62 *H*, 82.

63 *H*, 82.

64 *Gr. Ph.*, 74–8.

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## On the origin of nihilism – in view of the problem of technology and karma

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Akihiro Takeichi

### I

The fundamental form of European philosophy is metaphysics, which Aristotle called 'first philosophy'. First philosophy is 'the study of being as such' as well as a 'theoretical investigation of the primary origin and cause'. It would seem that these two different definitions are merged by positing the eternal unmoved mover which, as pure form, is the purpose of all beings and their movements. In this regard, God *qua* eternal unmoved mover is not simply the highest being (*das Seiendste*), but can serve as the primary origin of all beings by being the ultimate purpose and thereby the good. That is, because this being assumed the characteristic of the good, Aristotle was able to unify two definitions, 'the study of being as such' and 'the theoretical investigation of the primary origin and cause', by positing the Divine which is after all only a being in spite of being the highest.

However, this notion had already been established as a central feature of Western metaphysics when Plato sought the ultimate source of being in the idea of the good, which is the idea of all ideas. This character became all the more dominant from the medieval age onward when the Christian God with its ethico-religious character of love and justice was introduced into philosophy.

### II

Consequently, when Nietzsche exclaimed 'God is dead', this did not simply mean the death of the Christian God. It also meant a collapse of the god of metaphysics, that is, the ultimate good posited as beyond all beings and as bestowing purpose and order to the totality of beings.

Nietzsche refers to this death of God by saying, 'The ultimate value is deprived of its value'. This, he claims, is the essence of European nihilism. According to this interpretation, the death of God as the collapse of the metaphysical world is interpreted in terms of value, which is a modern perspective. As a result, prior to his death God is already deprived of his beingness (*Seiendheit*) as the highest being, and thus he becomes simply a 'value' which is appropriate for something.

Two important problems emerge from this. One is that God is relativized by the interpretation in terms of value, as we have just seen. Value is value insofar as it bears a value for something in a given circumstance. This 'something', as in 'for something', is generally speaking a human subject. To use Nietzsche's expression, it is 'life' or 'will'. Consequently, God came to be regarded as a value for life, that is, a condition for the will. A condition is appropriate as a condition only in a given circumstance. Therefore, God cannot but die in a circumstance where the condition, God, is inappropriate and valueless for life.

What is the circumstance that has rendered the condition, God, valueless for life? It is the invasion of nihilism. But to respond in this manner is tautological insofar as we interpret the essence of nihilism as the death of God and the devaluation of the highest value. Thus, in seeking the origin of nihilism the answer to this question should be sought by determining the intrinsic cause of life itself which has rendered God, the condition for life, valueless.

But is this kind of search not already a thinking within a nihilistic circumstance? For insofar as we question the intrinsic cause of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of God regarded as the condition of life, God is not regarded as necessary for the life in essence. Therefore, life becomes primary, and God becomes a secondary being whose existence or non-existence does not in the final analysis matter. However, to disclose life as the principle of positing God means that the Western metaphysical system in which the highest good was regarded as the origin of Being collapsed in Nietzsche. Moreover, it means that the principle supportive of such a system is laid bare. That is, the essence of Being itself was presented for the first time by Nietzsche in terms of will, which posited the highest value as God and so itself transcends the perspective of value. This means that Aristotle's 'study of being as such' came to be carried out for the first time in its true sense.

### III

Because 'the will to power' is a principle for positing values, it can also be a principle for overthrowing old values. This overthrowing leads old values to valuelessness. This means nihilism. To use Nietzsche's words,



it is a 'most extreme nihilism'. However, this 'most extreme nihilism', so long as its transvaluation is executed consciously with the principle for positing new values, is at the same time no longer nihilism. The will to power posits all beings as beings which are newly valued. Accordingly, beings are no longer nothingness, and therefore nihilism is overcome.

It is said that nihilism is overcome in Nietzsche. But has it really been overcome? Passive nihilism which is the deprivation of all values can at the same time be transformed into active nihilism. This is simply because it gains a principle for positing new values while overthrowing all old ones. Insofar as the will to power as this principle is the essence of Being, nihilism is after all nothing but a phenomenal fact; it is only a superficial, negative, and temporal aspect of 'life' (will) which develops as a whole while repeating the process of generation-extinction. But is nihilism nothing but a phenomenon to this extent? Can life or will, conceived of as the basis of this phenomenon, remain indifferent to nihilism without being subverted by it? Why does will have to posit value at all? We said that will or life, but not God, is presupposed as the primary Being in Nietzsche. But on what ground is this presupposition established?

Will constantly posits value, and by positing the condition for itself, will secures itself. This means that for will to be will it needs to posit itself (and thereby it maintains and enhances itself) by constantly positing an object. That is to say, to secure itself in this manner is the essence of will. The positing of an object for will is at the same time the giving of a ground for will's independent existence. Will, insofar as it is will, always needs to ground itself by positing a thing other than itself. This means that will itself lacks a ground; the basis of will is groundless. That its ground is nothing urges will toward positing values constantly.

We said earlier that Nietzsche regarded God as value prior to killing him, and that this was nothing other than nihilism. Now we must consider 'nothingness' as the 'origin of nihilism' which thrust this thought of Nietzsche's from its depth. This 'nothingness' lurks as the base of the will to power, which is itself the principle for the positing of all new values and so for overcoming nihilism. It would seem that this nothingness lurking at the base of the will to power was experienced by Nietzsche as the abyss of the eternal recurrence. But, since nothingness was experienced as that very eternal recurrence, this nothingness was incorporated within the will to power by the will to power itself in the manner of 'I willed! I will! And I shall will!' Thereby, nothingness is affirmed and is transformed into an objective being for will. Conversely, the will to power, which lacks a ground and hence must be constantly securing itself, comes to be endowed by means of the eternal recurrence with a ground that is eternity and necessity. Consequently, the nothingness lurking in the will to power (though such a nothingness is primordial

nothingness as the ground of the world, insofar as the will to power is the essence of Being) was not thoroughly thought out in Nietzsche in its relation to the nothingness of nihilism as the essential form of history.

To get a little ahead of ourselves, we could say that nothingness, as the ground of the world, is in this respect, the nothingness of the 'original nihilism' which Heidegger considered the essence of nihilism. Therefore, from this point on, we should like to reflect upon Heidegger's definition of nihilism and then move on to consider whether or not his definition can really reach the 'origin' of nihilism.

#### IV

The essay which best shows Heidegger's thinking on nihilism is 'The determination of nihilism in terms of the history of being' ('Die seinsgeschichtliche Bestimmung des Nihilismus'), which is contained in the second volume of *Nietzsche*. The title straightforwardly expresses the character of Heidegger's interpretation of nihilism. That is, nihilism has to do with nothing (*nihil-ism*), and he intends to determine it in terms of the history of Being.

First, to determine nihilism by way of the history of Being is to determine it in relation to the history of metaphysics, insofar as 'metaphysics has so far been the sole history of Being which can be surveyed'. That is, it does not mean to determine nihilism as a psychological phenomenon, nor to analyze it politically or sociologically, nor to deal with it ethically as a problematic of morality. But rather this approach thinks of nihilism as a phenomenon bearing the essence of metaphysics as 'the study of being as such'.

Secondly, if, judging from the above, metaphysics has an essential bearing on nihilism, we might say that the question that questions being as such in metaphysics, that is, the question about the Being of beings, is shown to have an essential bearing on nothingness.

Heidegger asserts in many places that the question of Being in metaphysics is the question about the Being of beings, and furthermore, it is a question questioning Being from the viewpoint of beings. In such a questioning the truth of Being itself, says Heidegger, is left out, and with respect to Being itself it is nothing (*es ist mit dem Sein nichts*). In contrast, Heidegger insists that his own questioning of Being is the question of Being itself, that is, the question about the truth of Being.

One might very well object that this sort of distinction, in which Being itself is nothing in the question of metaphysics while Heidegger questions Being itself, is meaningless unless the substance of each question is shown. In response to such an objection one needs to point out, as Heidegger has done, the fundamental structure of the oblivion of Being

throughout the history of Western metaphysics, so that it can be demonstrated that the content of the metaphysical question is questioned in the absence of the truth of Being itself. But even if one carries out the questioning as Heidegger actually did, that is, if one criticizes Western philosophical thinking as the oblivion of Being, placing Heidegger's standpoint of the thinking of Being itself on one side and Western philosophy as the standpoint of the oblivion of Being on the other, this would simply be in the end an external critique of traditional Western philosophy. Most criticisms of Heidegger defend the position of traditional philosophy, interpreting Heidegger's position in this manner.

However, an understanding of Heidegger's thought (with respect to his critique of metaphysics), which criticisms like this involve, in fact betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of Heidegger's thinking. Such a view assumes that something like Being itself is or can be thought in its pure form in Heidegger's thinking, while on the other hand Being itself is absent from metaphysical thinking. This sort of scheme of understanding is in the final analysis nothing but the method of cognition of metaphysics, which has not changed since ancient times. It is the method of placing on the one hand a pure thinking of the truth of the absolute and on the other hand an incomplete knowledge of the finite world.

But if we look at Heidegger's own thinking without distorting it through this sort of schema of traditional metaphysics, it is actually quite different. There is no denying that Being itself is questioned in his thinking, but this Being itself is nothing like an absolute or *causa sui*. Rather 'that it belongs to the truth of Being that Being never essentially presents itself without beings'.<sup>1</sup> That is, Being discloses itself (*lichtet sich*) in beings and it is nothing other than this disclosure. Accordingly, although metaphysics is endowed with the truth of beings and Being itself is absent in this openness (*Offenheit*) of beings, we must recognize that Being itself is essentially present as that very absence in metaphysics. The openness of Being is at the same time the concealment (*Verborg-enheit*) of Being, and the truth of Being emerges only as the untruth (*Unwahrheit*) of Being.

Therefore, if we designate as 'nihilism' the essence of metaphysics which is opened up as the truth of the Being of beings, and in which the truth of Being itself is 'nothing' (*nihil*), then this nothingness of nihilism is not simply derived from the knowledge of finite beings, but it belongs to the essence of Being itself. Conversely, we must grant that Being as absence must be the essence of nihilism.<sup>2</sup>

## V

All nihilistic phenomena, or nihilism in the ordinary sense, are derived from the essence of nihilism which we have just discussed. Metaphysics seeks the Being of beings, that is, beingness (*Seiendheit*), in place of Being itself *qua* absence, and 'only beings' exercise 'sole authority'. For example, all the beings in the world of today are brought into the destiny of Being which is 'modern technology' appearing in the final perfected stage of the history of Being, and they are set up as that which is useful. The world is replete with these 'useful' beings.

However, since a being is recognized as a being only insofar as it is useful, it cannot maintain its own steady beingness through itself. Once it loses its usefulness, it will be thrown away. Not only that, if people get tired of it after a certain passage of time, it will be re-made even though it may still be useful. People do not expect a work of architecture to have an everlasting solidity. A building is constructed in such a way that it can be easily demolished in the future. To be 'built and scrapped' is the destiny of beings in the contemporary age. That something is a being is only a provisional, temporary appearance.

So, the contemporary world is replete everywhere with beings, and, no doubt, beings are exercising sole authority, but actually this fact itself is realized on the basis of the essential nihility of beings. We must recognize that the origin of the flood of beings in the contemporary world is nothing but this nihility of beings itself. For this reason, the various nihilistic phenomena in the contemporary world are the other side of the inundation of beings. (For example, we can think of the excess of commercial art in contrast to the absence of essential art.)

Thus, beings, to the degree that they exist in the contemporary age, are supported by nihility, but Being which has been concealed through the flood of beings is presented in this very nihility as concealed Being. That is, the essence of 'original nihilism', that is, the absence of Being itself, is disclosed in the nihility that negates beings unlimitedly and in their basis.

It would seem that the preceding is Heidegger's definition by way of the 'history of Being' which is given to the essence of nihilism and to the nihilistic phenomena derived therefrom. Going one step further, we must ask what is the 'origin' from which the essence of nihilism is derived. To respond to this question, we must think out further the absence of Being, which Heidegger has thought of as the essence of nihilism.

## VI

As has been noted, absence belongs to the essence of Being itself, and since nihilism is *the* essential mode of the history of Being, 'the truth of Being has remained hidden from metaphysics throughout its history from Anaximander to Nietzsche'.<sup>3</sup> But this can be restated by saying that the truth of Being has been kept essentially concealed, and for this reason metaphysics from Anaximander to Nietzsche was able to blossom. That is, the absence of the truth of Being and the blossoming of the truth of beings which is metaphysics are two sides of the same thing. The oblivion of the truth of Being is not a result of a deficiency in metaphysical thinking, but was an essential and necessary consequence for metaphysics, which is the truth of beings, the revealing (*Entbergung*) and the unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*) of beings.

Accordingly, it would seem that one of the ways to investigate the origin from which the essence of nihilism as the absence or concealment of Being is derived is to inquire into how the revealing of beings, inseparable from the absence of Being, is realized. No doubt, one can think of investigating the origin of concealment (*Verborgenheit*) from the concealment itself, but insofar as it is an investigation by means of language whose essence is to express, such an alternative is not viable. Rather, the path we should follow lies nowhere else than in guarding (*wahren*) to the end the concealment *qua* concealment. Thus it should not end up that 'in the emerging of unconcealment what is essential to it, namely concealment, be lost, and moreover in favor of that which is unconcealed, which appears as what is'.<sup>4</sup> In guarding the concealment, we must clarify how the unconcealment is realized, that is, how the unconcealment breaks through the concealment, thereby disclosing beings and (at the same time) concealing the concealment itself. That is, we must clarify how the truth of beings brings about the oblivion of Being and the oblivion of this oblivion.

If the unconcealment of beings and the essence of nihilism, which is the concealment of Being, are two sides of the same thing, then the destiny of Being as the essence of technology, in which nihilism culminates, is also the time when beings are completely revealed. In fact, all beings, as has been seen, are exposed in the world of contemporary technology in broad daylight throughout the world. And what are thereby exposed are taken up one after another as that which is useful in some manner or another. However, the destiny of technology, or to use Heidegger's terminology, 'enframing' (*Gestell*), is not the destiny of Being which has just now started, but 'has been dominant, though in a concealed form, from ancient times'.<sup>5</sup> The function of setting up in 'enframing' (*Gestell*) is derived from the function of setting up in *poiēsis* in ancient times. The functions of these settings up are essentially related,

because they are both revealing (*Entbergung*).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the meaning of *thesis* (setting up) functions in a concealed way in the term *phusis*, which is the primordial word expressing Being.<sup>7</sup> Heidegger characterizes it as follows: '*Phusis* is *thesis*: to lay something before one, to place it, to produce and bring it forth, namely into presence [*Anwesen*].'<sup>8</sup>

Seen in this manner, insofar as Being is Being, or insofar as Being is the revealing, it essentially has the function of 'setting up'. Therefore, the destiny of Being as 'enframing' is the destiny originally determined insofar as Being is Being. 'Enframing is the Being itself'.<sup>9</sup> When 'enframing' can be traced back to the primordial essence of Being, the concealment of Being itself, which is inseparable from the derivation of 'enframing', is traced back to the primordial essence of Being also. However, from where are derived the functions of 'setting up' and 'revealing' which are 'the same'<sup>10</sup> as the concealment?

'Enframing' is referred to as 'making' (*Machenschaft*) in the lectures of Heidegger's middle period<sup>11</sup> and indicates the gathered totality of human creation and doing. If we interpret the function of 'setting up' as the original sense of revealing, it corresponds to the 'projection of world' (*Weltenwurf*) in *Being and Time* which makes it possible in advance for beings to be. However, Heidegger does not question why 'projection of world', 'making', and 'revealing' emerge. Insofar as one remains within the standpoint of phenomenological description, one cannot go beyond asserting that Being always is only as revealing and that man is that which constantly acts and carries out the projection of world. This is nothing other than the fundamental fact of Being and man. If the unconcealment of beings is fundamental, then the concealment of Being, which is inseparable from it and which is the essence of nihilism, also turns out to be a fundamental fact. Consequently, it seems that one can only assert that nihilism is a fact of experience in the most profound sense.

If the essence of nihilism is manifest in the contemporary world as the fundamental nihility of beings, the contemporary period is the age when the oblivion of the truth of Being is thoroughly complete. And at the same time, it is also the age when the concealment of the truth of Being is exposed without any longer being obscured by the unconcealment of beings. When the concealment is experienced as concealment, it becomes possible to question the way to mitigate in some manner the violence of the destiny of technology which is the extreme form of the revealing of beings.

Incidentally, the fundamental nihility of beings in light of Buddhism is 'all that is, is transitory' (*shogyō mujō*). Buddhism teaches that 'all that is, is transitory' is the true aspect of the world and claims that the enlightened awareness of this is transformed immediately into Nirvanic awareness of tranquillity. In contrast, if we think of enlightened awareness in Heidegger or in the destiny of Western metaphysics, it must be

thought to be achieved through the process of history, and moreover, at the very time when the oblivion of Being, though preventing such an awareness, reaches its maximum limit. At this moment the oblivion of Being turns round.

However, there must also be in Buddhism an ideal that one is prevented from this enlightened awareness, with his eyes enchanted only by beings rather than by the truth of Being. This brings us to the idea of *gō* (karma), the discussion of which will shed some light on the question with which we have been concerned, that is, the origin of the revealing, and thus, the origin of nihilism.

## VII

The term *gō* is a Japanese translation of the Sanskrit word *karma* and means 'making' (*zōsa*). That is, it means to 'make and act' (*gyō*; *saṃskāra*). If it is correct to understand *gyō*, which is the second element of the formula of twelve-fold causation (*engi*; *pratītya-samutpāda*), as *karma*,<sup>12</sup> then it means to 'make by gathering'. 'Gathering' is a gathering of all indirect and direct causes (*innen*; *hetu-pratyaya*). All things are realized by virtue of various harmonious combinations of direct and indirect causes. This requires something to gather all the direct and indirect causes: this is *gō*, or karma. The substance of karma is understood in early Buddhism to be 'intention' (*shi*), the 'function of will'.<sup>13</sup> Seen in this manner, karma can be understood as the function of will that gathers all things in order for beings to be. This corresponds to what Heidegger called the revealing of beings, although the former is formed with a volitional aspect.

Where does karma thus understood come from? The origin of karma is the concealment of truth, as it is said that 'to make and act' (*gyō*; *saṃskāra*) is due to 'absolute ignorance' (*mumyō*; *avidyā*). Just as the concealment of Being engenders the revealing of beings in Heidegger, so the concealment of truth which is absolute ignorance emerges outwardly as karma. According to early Buddhist sutras, absolute ignorance is always juxtaposed with craving (*katsuai*). Craving is insatiable 'ego-desire', as in, for example, a thirsty person ceaselessly drinking water. Consequently, karma generated by absolute ignorance, that is, the essence of the function of will that reveals beings, can be understood as ceaseless ego-desire.

The idea of karma is further deepened in Mahayana Buddhism, especially in the thought of Shinran (1173–1262) in Japan. We have just said that the essence of karma is ego-desire. However, this does not mean that the 'I' performs karmic action. Whether the present 'I' does good or evil is dependent upon past karma (*shukugō*; *pūrva-karma*).<sup>14</sup>

The moral standpoint based upon the self-power (*jiriki*) is completely denied in the statement that 'it is not because my mind (heart) is good that I do not kill'. This means that all of one's existence is dependent upon past karma, that past karma determines all of one's present and future actions. However, the past, in which everything is determined beforehand, is no longer an aspect of time which is past, but is eternal. Past karma is an eternal fact without beginning or end. That is, past karma exists along with ignorance in an inseparable oneness with the existence of man. Past karma and absolute ignorance are, as it were, the fundamental fact for human existence. This corresponds to the very same fundamental fact that both the concealment of Being and the revealing of beings are equipurimordial.

As seen in the foregoing, past karma has ego-desire as its essence. Accordingly, if past karma is the fundamental fact for human existence, it means that we must carry on our shoulders ego-desire as the essence of our self, even though we have not chosen it ourselves. We must always live according to it. We are endlessly driven by our ego-desire, through which we constantly end up committing ourselves to something. This is our life. However, whatever we commit ourselves to, whether good or evil, is not our doing. It is brought about by our past karma, which is ego-desire.

Heidegger's investigation of the essence of technology does not attempt to define technology by placing man in the center in such a way as to regard technology either as a means for an end or as a tool for man's action. Rather, he regards the essence of technology as the function of truth that reveals beings, and through which all beings including man are set up. Consequently, the essence of technology thus conceived is not that which is 'made by man',<sup>15</sup> that is, it is not technical. Rather, it has 'a transcendental character' which is unmanipulatable by man, tools, or machines produced by man. It claims man and thereby controls him. Because man always listens to the calling of this claim, he goes around ceaselessly so as to set up all beings as useful.

Seen in this manner, we must recognize that karma and the essence of technology are fundamentally functions of the same thing. In other words, karma or technology means ceaseless human action without beginning or end. An action in this sense has emanated from eons ago up to the present through the fountain of absolute ignorance (the concealment of Being) accompanying the flood of (essentially nihilistic) beings, and thereby has formed the essence of history. This I take to be the ultimate origin of nihilism.



## VIII

Finally, I would like to offer briefly my thoughts concerning how we should deal with the destiny of nihilism. As we have observed, the revealing of beings (Enframing) or karma has generated history *qua* nihilism. However, insofar as revealing and karma are the eternal essence of human life and Being, their denial is a rejection of life and Being as such. That is, the origin of nihilism is Being and life as such. But if we do not somehow reject nihilism, it leads to the destruction of Being and life. Either alternative means death. This is, no doubt, an inescapable predicament. How do we break through it?

One must shatter the delusion of beings which dominates the contemporary period by seeing thoroughly into the fundamental nihility which runs at the bottom of the stream of beings. Thereby one must bring karma, which brought forth this stream of beings, to self-awareness (*jikaku*) as 'one's own sin of karmic action' which originated in the beginningless past. One must existentially bring to self-awareness the fact that Being is immediately 'danger' and life is immediately 'sin'. The origin of ignorance or nihilism will not be transformed fundamentally until each of us carries out this 'self-awareness'. Only then, it would seem, can the 'Enframing' and 'karma' be housed within a quiet and calm light. However, the self-awareness that would bring about a transformation of world history cannot be attained through a half-hearted reflection on sin. Every one in his or her own self-awareness must realize that he or she is the most sinful being in the world. The phrase expressing such a self-awareness is 'When I carefully consider the Vow (*gan, seigan*) which Amida brought forth after five kalpas' contemplation (*goko shiyui*), I find that it was solely for me, Shinran, alone!'

Translated by Monte Hull and S. Nagatomo

## Notes

1 Martin Heidegger, *Was Ist Metaphysik?*, 6th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1981), p. 41.

2 Heidegger, *Nietzsche II* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961), p. 356.

3 Heidegger, *Was Ist Metaphysik?*, p. 10.

4 *ibid.*, p. 11.

5 Cf. Heidegger, *Einblick in das, was ist* (1949).

6 Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1967), pp. 28, 38.

7 Cf. Heidegger, *Einblick in das, was ist*.

8 Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, p. 49.

9 Cf. Heidegger, *Einblick in das, was ist*.

10 Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, pp. 270–2.

11 Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1953), p. 122.

12 Kazuya Funabashi, *Gō no kenkyū (Study of Karma)* (Kyoto: Hozokan, 1952), p. 13.

13 *ibid.*, p. 38.

14 I have learned much on the interpretation of *shukugō* (Karmic determination) from Yoshifumi Ueda's *Bukkyō ni okeru gō no shisō (The Thought of Karma in Buddhism)*.

15 Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, p. 26.

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## Heidegger and Japanese thought: how much did he know and when did he know it?

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Graham Parkes

One branch of the burgeoning literature on Heidegger has remained relatively stunted – that concerning the relations of his thinking to Asian thought. And while the occasional comparative study has appeared over the past decade or two, discussions of the *influence* of Asian ideas on the development of Heidegger's thinking have been especially rare.<sup>1</sup> It may still be too early to form an adequate picture of the influences on Heidegger's thinking from East-Asian sources, and a thorough treatment would require extensive research in Germany and Japan.<sup>2</sup> But given the enormous impact of Heidegger's ideas on twentieth-century thought, and since the possibility of considerable influence on his thinking from non-Western sources has not been entertained in the Anglo-American scholarship, the amount at stake for the history of ideas calls for a provisional discussion in the meantime. All the more so since the answer to the question in the subtitle above would appear to be: 'Quite a bit, and early on' – and because the evidence suggests that during the 1920s and 1930s Heidegger may have appropriated a number of ideas from Chinese and Japanese philosophy into the central development of his own thought. Ultimately, the probability that Heidegger's thinking was influenced in its formative stages by ideas from the East-Asian tradition surely calls for some different readings of the Heideggerian text in future.

### 1 Three thinkers from the Orient

It was in 1921, when Heidegger was a *Dozent* working under the imposing presence of Husserl at Freiburg, that the first of several eminent (or, at the beginning, imminently eminent) philosophers from Japan made what came to be known as 'the Freiburg pilgrimage' to study with Heidegger. His name was Yamanouchi Tokuryû.<sup>3</sup> The same age as

Heidegger, Yamanouchi was a scholar of broad range who went on to found the Department of Greek Philosophy at Kyoto University and at the same time was one of the first thinkers to introduce phenomenology to Japan. He was also a younger colleague of Nishida Kitarô, a philosopher at Kyoto University whose epoch-making work *Zen no kenkyû* (*An Inquiry into the Good*) of 1911 is regarded as the first masterwork of modern Japanese philosophical thought.<sup>4</sup> Later, during the 1930s, Yamanouchi was to become one of the few thinkers of sufficient stature to challenge Nishida's formidable philosophical system.<sup>5</sup>

The following year two more visitors – men destined to become major figures in modern Japanese philosophy – arrived in Germany: Tanabe Hajime and Miki Kiyoshi. Again, both were younger colleagues of 'the Master', Nishida Kitarô. Tanabe first went to Berlin to study with Alois Riehl, and from there he moved to Freiburg to study with Husserl. In Freiburg he was introduced to Heidegger, who, though four years his junior, impressed him as brilliant. Miki went first to Heidelberg to work with Heinrich Rickert, and then on to Marburg – where Heidegger had just moved – to study with the thinker whose thought subsequent generations of Japanese philosophers would find so congenial.<sup>6</sup> There being less to say about Miki in relation to our present concerns, let us consider his case first.

Miki Kiyoshi had studied philosophy at Kyoto with Nishida and another major figure in the 'Kyoto School' of philosophy, Hatano Seiichi, as well as with Tanabe. After a year at Heidelberg, he was induced by Heidegger's reputation to follow him to Marburg when he moved there in 1924. Deeply impressed by the 'postwar anxiety' that pervaded German society, Miki felt that this 'existential' atmosphere informed the development of Heidegger's thinking and contributed to his growing popularity as a teacher. Miki's first book, published in Japan in 1926 after a subsequent period of study in Paris, dealt with Pascal's conception of the human being by way of an application of Heidegger's hermeneutic analysis of *Dasein*. Since *Sein und Zeit* was not to appear until the following year, one assumes that Miki gained his understanding of Heidegger's method through conversations during his year at Marburg. Ohashi Ryôsuke has suggested that Miki's reading of Pascal, in which he emphasizes concern with death as the decisive element in our consciousness of time, is evidence of his appropriation of ideas Heidegger was developing at the time Miki had worked with him.<sup>7</sup>

Although after his return to Japan Miki became more and more concerned with social and political philosophy, being deeply influenced by Marx, the existential basis of his thinking endured, as is evidenced by his continuing concern with the idea of nothingness. He had been acquainted since his student days with the 'Pure Land' Buddhism of the thirteenth-century thinker Shinran, and on arriving in Europe, he was

intrigued to find how prevalent the idea of nothingness was there – albeit in the quite different context of European nihilism. Ohashi suggests (*JH*, pp. 27–8) that Miki's engagement with *das Nichts* in Heidegger proceeds from a basis in the Buddhist conception of nothingness (*mu*). At any rate, the idea of nothingness is at the basis of what many regard as his philosophical masterpiece, *Kôshôryoku no ronri* (*The Logic of the Power of Imagination*), which was clearly influenced by Heidegger's discussion of the transcendental imagination in his 1929 book on Kant. But to appreciate the significance of the fact that the topics of death and nothingness come up in Miki's engagement with Heidegger's thinking, it will help to step back for a moment before considering the more complex case of Tanabe Hajime.

If one were to characterize in the broadest strokes the major difference between the philosophy of the so-called Kyoto School (of which the thinkers mentioned so far were the founding fathers), and the mainstream of the Western philosophical tradition, one could concur with the judgment often advanced by the Japanese that whereas Western philosophies have tended to be philosophies of life based upon inquiry into the nature of being, East-Asian philosophies in general (and that of the Kyoto School in particular) have tended to focus much more on the topics of death and nothingness. Now, much of what makes Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* such a revolutionary work is the central role played by the idea of *das Nichts* and his existential conception of death – as confirmed by the part they play in Heidegger's subsequent pursuit of the *Seinsfrage*. A pertinent question, then, concerns the extent to which Heidegger had already developed his ideas on nothingness and death by the time of his first contact with the ideas of the Kyoto School thinkers.

A definitive answer to this question will be possible only when Heidegger's complete *Nachlass* from the period up to 1922 has been published. However, a perusal of the currently available materials does not provide any evidence that Heidegger engaged the ideas of death and nothingness on an existential or ontological level before the treatment in *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffes* in 1925.<sup>8</sup> There is a brief discussion of *das Nichts* in Heidegger's lectures of the Winter semester 1921/2 at Freiburg (shortly before Tanabe and Miki arrived); but the nothing in question is very much a 'relative nothing', relative to the kind of negation involved, or else is 'the nothing of factual life'.<sup>9</sup> And while there is a very brief mention in the lectures from the Summer semester of 1923 of such themes as *das Man* and *Angst*, there is no discussion of death or nothingness.<sup>10</sup> Our question, then – whether Heidegger may have been prompted by his conversations with the Kyoto School philosophers to elaborate the idea of *das Nichts* at the level of fundamental ontology or develop his existential conception of death – remains interestingly open.

Tanabe Hajime is widely regarded as being the second greatest figure (after Nishida) in modern Japanese philosophy.<sup>11</sup> His personal and philosophical relationship with Heidegger was much closer and more enduring than Miki's, who became sharply critical of Heidegger after the events of 1933. It was in part because of Nishida's interest in phenomenology that Tanabe had gone to Freiburg to study with Husserl. Whether it was disappointment with Husserl and original phenomenology, or else enthusiasm over the new turn the method was taking at the hands of the younger thinker, Tanabe politely bowed out of Husserl's classes in order to attend the lecture course Heidegger gave in the Summer semester of 1923 under the title *Ontology: Hermeneutics of Facticity*. Heidegger had, in turn, ample occasion to be impressed by the visitor from Japan, having gladly agreed to Tanabe's request for private tutorials in German philosophy. Over the ensuing decades the two men remained on cordial terms, and when Tanabe was awarded (*in absentia*) an honorary doctorate by the University of Freiburg, Heidegger sent him a congratulatory copy of the limited edition of his *Gespräch mit Hebel* furnished with a recent photograph.<sup>12</sup>

An appraisal of the nature of the philosophical interchange between Tanabe and Heidegger is made difficult by the almost complete silence the latter maintained about his Japanese colleagues and their ideas. And while Tanabe continued to make reference to Heidegger's works throughout his career, he appears to have been a very reticent man, and relatively little of his correspondence has survived. However, approaching from the side of Tanabe's references to Heidegger, let us see what reconstruction of their philosophical relationship is possible – with respect first to the topic of death and then to the idea of nothingness.

After his return to Japan in 1924, Tanabe published an essay entitled 'The new turn in phenomenology: Heidegger's phenomenology of life'.<sup>13</sup> Disregarding some book reviews that appeared between 1917 and 1919, this essay has the distinction of being the first substantial commentary on Heidegger's thought to have been published in any language. The essay is of particular interest since its concluding section gives us an idea of how Heidegger's 1923 lecture course ended. (The transcript published in the *Gesamtausgabe* is said by the editor to be lacking the last page or two: 'it breaks off suddenly in the middle of the train of thought'.<sup>14</sup>) It is interesting that a breach in the Heideggerian text should be fillable only on the basis of Tanabe's account – the ultimate topic of which is death.

Missing from the transcript of the lectures in the *Gesamtausgabe* – but prominent in the conclusion of Tanabe's discussion of Heidegger's phenomenology of life – is an account of the role played by the confrontation with death. Since the following passage apparently provides the

closest access to Heidegger's first words on the topic of death, it is worth citing at some length:

Just as life is not merely a passage [of time], so death is not the mere termination or breaking off of such a passage. Rather death stands before *Dasein*, as something inevitable. One can even say that it is precisely in the way life regards death and deals with it in its concern that life displays its way of being. If it flees from the death that stands before it as something inevitable, and wants to conceal and forget it in its concern with the world of relations, this is the flight of life itself in the face of itself – which means precisely that the ultimate possibility-of-being of life becomes an impossibility-of-being. On such a basis, to grasp *Dasein* in its primordial way of being is ultimately impossible. Because the way in which *Dasein* is concerned with death – from which it would like to flee but cannot – informs its very way of being, one must rather emphasize that it is just there, where life voluntarily opens itself to certain death, that it is truly manifest to itself.

(*JH*, pp. 107–8)

When translated into German this passage, written by Tanabe in 1924, sounds uncannily like the Heidegger of *Sein und Zeit*. The passage is all the more significant since Heidegger may not have written on the topic of death previously. In the event that he did not, then the fact that the first evidence of his interest in the topic comes from Tanabe is significant – since it suggests that Heidegger may have been encouraged to engage this issue, so central to the existential analytic and the theory of temporality presented in *Sein und Zeit*, precisely by his encounter with his Japanese colleague.<sup>15</sup>

This speculation is encouraged by some statements of Tanabe's that appear in his contribution to the *Festschrift* for Heidegger's seventieth birthday.<sup>16</sup> The essay is a translation of the second half of a monograph published the previous year, in 1958, entitled 'Sei no sonzaigaku ka shi no benshōhō ka?' ('Ontology of life or dialectics of death?') – the original version of which bore the subtitle 'A polemical engagement with Heideggerian ontology'. Ohashi Ryōsuke points out that the first half of the monograph, which was not translated for the *Festschrift*, contains some quite vehement criticism of Heidegger's 'ontology of life' (*JH*, p. 26). Tanabe begins his contribution to the *Festschrift* by contrasting the general orientation toward philosophies of life in the Western tradition with the more death-oriented approach characteristic of East-Asian philosophies. For thinkers in the Buddhist tradition, 'in thinking of the enigmatic inevitability of death, the ephemerality and fragility of life pervades us to the very marrow' (pp. 93–4). For this reason, Tanabe continues,

he had always been dissatisfied in his studies of Western philosophy – until he went to Freiburg in 1922.

He goes on to recall how deeply impressed he was to discover, on first attending Heidegger's lectures, 'that in his thinking a meditation on death had become central to philosophy and supported it from the ground up. I could not help feeling that I had now found a way to the philosophy I had been seeking.' The impression these remarks may give of Tanabe's having come upon a fully developed Heideggerian philosophy of death is misleading. Tanabe was an exceedingly modest man – even in the context of a general tendency of the Japanese toward (by Western standards) extreme self-effacement – and these remarks constituted the introduction to his contribution to the *Festschrift* for the seventieth birthday of the man regarded by the Japanese as the greatest living philosopher.

Given that Tanabe's scholarly output prior to his trip to Germany had been largely in the fields of science and mathematics (his first two books, published in 1915 and 1918, were on the natural sciences), it seems as if the encounter with Heidegger helped him to connect his academic work with a deeper level of his existence. This deeper level had to do with Tanabe's lifelong concern with philosophy of religion: Christianity had interested him intensely during his school days, and he devoted most of his later career to religious philosophy, undertaking numerous comparisons between Christianity and Japanese Buddhism. It is reasonable to suppose that at the time of his meeting Heidegger Tanabe was himself deeply concerned with the existential problem of death, and the discovery that Heidegger was working a number of existential concerns into his 'phenomenology of life' showed him that such topics could be engaged philosophically as well as on a personal level.

Another factor that is relevant here will bring us to the related issue of nothingness. For several years prior to his visit to Freiburg Tanabe had been a junior colleague of Nishida's at Kyoto. While Nishida was well acquainted with German thought – the mystical tradition, German Idealism, and neo-Kantianism in particular – the philosophy he had begun to elaborate in his masterwork of 1911 was experientially based on the practice of Zen Buddhism and to a large extent turned on the Buddhist conception of nothingness (*mu*).<sup>17</sup> Tanabe himself was to make the idea of *zettai mu* (absolute nothingness) central to the philosophy of religion he elaborated in his mature thought – even though his different understanding of the idea was a major point of contention in his subsequent philosophical disagreements with Nishida.<sup>18</sup>

Not long after his arrival in Freiburg, Tanabe was invited to give a presentation on Nishida's philosophy to a select group of German philosophers – including Heidegger – at Husserl's home.<sup>19</sup> They could not have found a speaker more qualified, since Tanabe had been following the development of Nishida's thought for the previous ten years. Unless



some record of Tanabe's presentation is discovered, one can only speculate on its content. But since Nishida had been developing his idea of 'absolute nothingness' since 1911, and Tanabe was at the time the best interpreter of his mentor's thinking, his talk must have dealt with Nishida's conception of nothingness (especially since the idea of *mu* was to become so central to Tanabe's own thinking).

At the conclusion of a chapter of *An Inquiry into the Good* entitled 'The phenomena of consciousness as the sole reality', Nishida argues that – in contrast to the situation in the physical world under the law of causality – in consciousness something *can* arise out of nothing (chap. 7). In a chapter dealing with his conception of God as the ground of reality, Nishida follows the *via negativa* of Nicholas of Cusa and the idea of God as total negation: 'From this standpoint, God is absolute nothingness.' He goes on to say that 'precisely because He is able to be nothingness, there is no place whatsoever where he is not present, no place where he is not at work'.<sup>20</sup> And in the context of a later invocation of Nicholas of Cusa and Jakob Boehme, Nishida writes:

Nothingness separated from being is not true nothingness; the one separated from the all is not the true one; equality separated from distinction is not true equality. In the same way that if there is no God there is no world, if there is no world there is no God.<sup>21</sup>

The possibility that Nishida's thought is behind Heidegger's conception of nothingness deserves serious consideration – even though there are, of course, earlier prefigurations in the Western tradition. One thinks of the conceptions of 'nothingness' in such thinkers as Meister Eckhart, Nicholas of Cusa and Jakob Boehme, with whom Heidegger was familiar (if perhaps not as familiar as Nishida was at the time), as well as in the idealism of Hegel and Schelling. It is interesting that Hegel, in the context of his well-known formulation in Book I of the *Wissenschaft der Logik*: 'Pure Being and pure Nothing are the same', refers to Buddhist thought: 'In oriental systems, and especially in Buddhism, *nothingness* or the void [*das Leere*], is the absolute principle.'<sup>22</sup> Just as interesting is the fact that Schelling (on whom Heidegger gave many lectures) mentions Lao Zi's notion of nothingness in a passage in *The Philosophy of Mythology*:

The great art or wisdom of life consists precisely in attaining this pure potential, which is nothing and yet at the same time all. The entire *Dao de jing* is concerned with showing, through a great variety of the most pregnant tropes, the great and insuperable power of non-being.<sup>23</sup>

An immediate (though generally unremarked) precursor with respect

to a radical notion of nothingness is Max Scheler, whom Heidegger refers to often in his lectures from the 1920s, as well as in the text of *Sein und Zeit*. In his essay 'Vom Wesen der Philosophie' of 1917, Scheler proposed as the fundamental basis of philosophical activity the insight 'that *there is anything at all* or, put more precisely, that "*there is not nothing*" (whereby the word "nothing" . . . means *absolute nothing* . . .)'.<sup>24</sup> After a discussion of how the circumstance that 'there isn't nothing' prompts philosophical wonderment, Scheler goes on to say: 'Whoever has not looked into the *abyss of absolute nothing* in this way will also completely overlook the eminently positive nature of the content of the insight that there is anything at all and not rather nothing.' This phrasing will be familiar to those acquainted with Heidegger's discourses on nothing published at the end of the 1920s.

In a discussion of religious activity in the essay 'Problems of religion' from 1920, Scheler returned to the topic of absolute nothing:

To believe in 'nothing' is something quite different from not believing. It is – as evidenced by the powerful emotional impact that the thought of 'nothing' exercises on our soul – a highly positive state of the spirit. *Absolute nothing* is to be sharply distinguished from every merely relative nothing as a phenomenon. Absolute nothing is not-being-something and not-existing in one, in utter unity and simplicity.<sup>25</sup>

In a footnote at this point Scheler says that this unity distinguishes absolute nothing from the Buddhist idea of nirvana, which he understands (mistakenly) as 'merely freedom and redemption from the actual world'. Although Scheler's enterprise is more explicitly religious than Heidegger's, his talk later in the same paragraph of 'metaphysical *Angst*' and 'religious *Schauer* in the face of absolute nothing' is a striking anticipation of Heidegger's formulations several years later.

Assuming that Tanabe and Heidegger did talk about nothingness, it is probable that the precursor in the East-Asian philosophical tradition of the Japanese notion of *mu* was also a topic of conversation: the Chinese notion of *wu*, which figures prominently in the classical Daoist texts attributed to Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. In his only reference to Tanabe in his published works, in the 1954 dialogue between a Japanese and an Inquirer, Heidegger has the Japanese say: 'Professor Tanabe often came back to the question you once addressed to him of why we Japanese didn't reflect upon the venerable beginnings of our own thinking instead of greedily chasing after the latest new things in European philosophy.'<sup>26</sup> The 'venerable beginnings' of Japanese Zen certainly include philosophical ideas from classical Daoism, and Heidegger knew this when he wrote the dialogue. As we shall see shortly, the relevant Daoist texts had been available in German since 1912, and so if Tanabe had referred

to them in their conversations Heidegger would have had access to the translations.

The influences on Heidegger's developing conception of *das Nichts* are multiple and complex, and deserve detailed study when all the relevant manuscripts have been published. The question is of course complicated by the fact that Nishida, Tanabe, *et al.*, were conversant not only with the German mystical tradition but also with the Idealists' understandings of 'absolute nothingness' – a familiarity that no doubt affected the development of their own, essentially Buddhist elaborations of the idea. But for the time being one can say that it is highly probable that Heidegger was introduced to the East-Asian conception of nothingness before he began to develop his own radical thinking on the topic of *das Nichts*.

Back in 1921 another Japanese philosopher had arrived in Europe who was to spend eight years of study there: Kuki Shūzō, often known as 'Count Kuki' because of his aristocratic origins. One year older than Heidegger, Kuki had been one of the co-participants with Miki in Rickert's seminar in Heidelberg in 1923. After three years in Paris studying French philosophy, Kuki returned to Germany in the spring of 1927 in order to work with Husserl in Freiburg.<sup>27</sup> After meeting Heidegger at Husserl's home, however, Kuki was sufficiently impressed by the younger philosopher that he moved to Marburg later that year in order to attend Heidegger's lectures. Apparently Kuki was already acquainted with Heidegger's philosophy, since it is mentioned in the first draft of his manuscript on the idea of *iki*, which he had completed in Paris the previous year.<sup>28</sup> His book *Haideggah no tetsugaku* (*The Philosophy of Heidegger*) of 1933 would be the first book-length study of Heidegger's thought to be published in any language.

Kuki was not only a brilliant philosopher but a man of supremely refined culture, and among the Japanese thinkers who visited Heidegger in the 1920s he seems to have made the greatest impression on the host. Kuki and his ideas play a major role in Heidegger's dialogue 'Aus einem Gespräch von der Sprache' – indeed one quite disproportional to their presence in the actual conversation on which the dialogue was based.<sup>29</sup> While the dialogue in general bears only a tenuous relation to the original conversation, being for the most part Heidegger's free invention, the Inquirer's opening statement – 'To Count Kuki belongs my enduring remembrance' – is surely a genuine expression of the author's feelings. It also rings true when the Inquirer remarks that his conversations with Kuki, 'unfolded freely and spontaneously [*wie ein freies Spiel*] in our home, where Count Kuki sometimes came with his wife, who would wear traditional Japanese dress' – and that 'the East-Asian world would thereby shine more radiantly' (*US*, p. 89/4).

The Inquirer goes on to say that his conversations with Kuki concerned

the latter's notion of *iki* and, more broadly, 'the essential nature of *East-Asian* art and poetry'. Since Kuki had completed a first draft of his seminal work on *iki* in Paris in 1926, one can well imagine its being a topical theme in his conversations with Heidegger.<sup>30</sup> In fact we can probably gain a better sense of the content of these conversations from Kuki's side than from Heidegger's poetically processed recollections of some twenty-five years later. After his year at Marburg Kuki went back to France, and in August of 1928 he delivered two lectures in French at a colloquium at Pontigny under the title 'Propos sur le temps'.<sup>31</sup>

It is not unreasonable to suppose that Kuki was working on the ideas expressed in these lectures (and the subsequent book) while he was in Marburg and that he discussed them with Heidegger – especially since the second talk, entitled 'The expression of the infinite in Japanese art', deals precisely with what Heidegger's Inquirer would later refer to as 'the essential nature of *East-Asian* art and poetry'. In the first talk, 'The notion of time and repetition in Oriental time', Kuki deals mainly with Hindu and Buddhist ideas of temporality, but he also makes some interesting remarks about *bushidō*, the 'way of the samurai'. In view of his keen interest in *bushidō*, it is likely that Kuki's conversations with Heidegger touched upon the ethical code of the samurai – one of the major tenets of which is summed up in the maxim: 'The way of the samurai is death'. Heidegger would have been struck by the remarkable similarity between the attitude advocated by *bushidō* toward death and the ideal of *vorlaufende Entschlossenheit* he had just presented in *Sein und Zeit* (1927).

Kuki's second set of *propos* opens with a reference to the Japanese critic and philosopher of art Okakura Kakuzō, who introduced some of the theoretical background of Japanese art to the West with the publication in English of *The Ideals of the East* in 1903. If Kuki and Heidegger talked about Japanese art, then the former – who knew Okakura personally – must have recommended Okakura's books. Incidentally, a contemporary Japanese philosopher has pointed out that the earliest use of the term *In-der-Welt-sein* (resplendent with hyphens) occurs not in *Sein und Zeit* but in a German translation of Okakura's *The Book of Tea* published in 1919.<sup>32</sup> If Heidegger did read Okakura, he would have learned a great deal about Daoism and the Zen-inspired arts of Japan, such as Noh drama and *tanka* and *haiku* poetry (with which he was certainly acquainted by the time he wrote the dialogue with the Japanese visitor). He would in any case have been introduced to these things by Kuki, since they figure prominently in the text of his talk about Japanese art.<sup>33</sup>

In this second talk, Kuki quotes from no fewer than nine chapters of the *Dao de jing* by Lao Zi and also refers to the other major classic of philosophical Daoism, the *Zhuang Zi*. It is possible that Heidegger was already acquainted with these texts, there being several German trans-

lations available at the time. A translation of the *Lao Zi* with introduction and commentary had been published by Victor Von Strauss in 1870.<sup>34</sup> An edition of Zhuang Zi edited by Martin Buber had appeared in 1910 – with which we know Heidegger was familiar at least by 1930.<sup>35</sup> The following two years saw the publication of translations of both the *Lao Zi* and the *Zhuang Zi* by Richard Wilhelm which, like the Buber edition, have been in print more or less continuously since then.<sup>36</sup> And so, assuming Kuki did quote the classical Daoist thinkers in his discussions with Heidegger, the latter would have had to go no farther than the university library or bookshop in Marburg to find German editions of the relevant texts. And in view of Heidegger's acquaintance with the Buber edition of Zhuang Zi by 1930, it is more than likely that he discovered that text during the period of his conversations with Kuki in 1927/8 (if he had not come across it earlier).

The conclusion to be drawn from the account so far is that by the time *Sein und Zeit* was published, Heidegger had engaged in philosophical dialogue with three of the greatest thinkers of twentieth-century Japan, whose formidable intellects covered a range of fields: philosophy of science and religion (Tanabe), social and political thought (Miki) and metaphysics and aesthetics (Kuki).

## 2 Tracing the signs in the texts

The foregoing considerations should prompt us to view Heidegger's texts from the late 1920s on in a somewhat different light. Reinhard May has documented a number of significant similarities between formulations in Heidegger's texts and German translations of Daoist and Zen works which predate the respective writings by Heidegger. Limitations of space necessitate a restriction of the scope of what follows here to a few texts from Heidegger's 'middle period' (1929–35). Let us begin with the 1929 essay 'Was ist Metaphysik?', the main aim of which is to pose and respond to the question of 'how it stands with *nothing*'.

In a sense this essay is a reiteration and amplification of the discussion of *das Nichts* in *Sein und Zeit*. In both texts the basic mood of *Angst* plays a major role in revealing *das Nichts*, but there is a discernible change of tone. In *Sein und Zeit* there is something 'threatening' (*das Drohende*) that is so close 'that it constricts and takes one's breath away' (SZ, pp. 186, 343 (*Bedrohung*)). In anxiety 'it feels eerie [*unheimlich*]' and there is an unpleasant sense of being 'not at home [*un-zu-Hause*]' in the world (SZ, p. 188). When *Angst* arises, 'what is present . . . [shows itself] in an empty mercilessness', and with all meaning drained out of the environment one is left clutching 'at the nothing of the world [*ins Nichts der Welt*]' (SZ, p. 343). The confrontation with *das Nichts* is a

shattering experience, and one quite distant from the *Angst*-free attitude one finds toward nothingness and death in the texts of the Daoists.

By 1929, however, the feeling tone of anxiety has changed. Heidegger begins by remarking that anxiety stops any kind of confusion arising and is rather 'pervaded by a special kind of peace' (*eine eigentümliche Ruhe*).<sup>37</sup> He goes on to say that there is a certain 'retreating' in anxiety 'that is no longer a fleeing, but rather a spellbound peace' (p. 34). There is a certain equanimity now as *Dasein* watches beings in their totality 'glide away' – as if the thinker were familiar with the line in the *Lao Zi* that says 'Being and non-being give birth to one another',<sup>38</sup> or had been reading those magnificent passages in the *Zhuang Zi* that convey the serenity with which the Daoist sage participates in the cyclical interchanges between *yin* and *yang* that drive the transformations we call birth and death. And in view of the ineffability of the encounter with nothing – 'Anxiety deprives us of speech' (p. 32) – and of the way the *dao* steers all things yet is itself no thing, the following remarks of Lao Zi's about the Way come to mind: 'Tao is empty'; 'It is an abyss, like the ancestor of all things'; 'Always it is nameless and reverts to non-being'.<sup>39</sup>

A related difference between the two texts concerns the pronounced emphasis in the latter upon the *unity* of *das Nichts* and *das Seiende im Ganzen*: 'Nothingness is encountered together with [*in eins mit*] beings in totality', and 'Nothingness announces itself precisely with and in what-is [*mit und an dem Seienden*] as it glides away as a whole' (pp. 33–4). This formulation is strikingly reminiscent of the central insight of Mahayana Buddhism (on which Zen is based), which is that nothingness or emptiness (*sunyatā*) is not beyond, or different from, the things of the phenomenal world. In the best-known formulation of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*: 'Form is not different from emptiness; emptiness is not different from form.' Heidegger himself refers to this formulation in the 'Gespräch von der Sprache', when he has the Japanese say 'We say: Without *Iro* [colour . . . and more than whatever is perceivable by the senses], no *Ku* [emptiness and the open]' (*US*, pp. 102/14–15).

The first translation of any work of Heidegger's was the translation into Japanese of 'Was ist Metaphysik?', which was published in Japan the year after the original appeared, in 1930. The essay was translated by Yuasa Seinosuke, who had come to Germany in 1926 and was to stay until the late 1930s. After studying with Karl Jaspers for a year in Heidelberg, he had gone to Freiburg in 1929 to study with Heidegger. In view of the parallels we have noted between Heidegger's conception of *das Nichts* in that essay and East-Asian conceptions of nothingness, some remarks Heidegger made about the Japanese translation of the essay some thirty years later are revealing.

A philosopher by the name of Kojima Takehiko, who had studied

with Nishida and Tanabe in Kyoto, had visited Heidegger at his home in Messkirch in 1955. In 1963 he wrote a long letter to Heidegger which was subsequently published together with a lengthy reply as a pair of 'open letters' in both Japanese and German. Kojima starts out by saying that when an outline of Heidegger's *Gelassenheit* was published in a Japanese newspaper, 'it almost seemed to us as if you, Herr Professor, were directly addressing us Japanese' (*JH*, p. 216). (Hardly surprising, in view of the allusions in that text to both Zen and Daoism.) At one point in his reply Heidegger refers to 'What is metaphysics?':

That essay, which was translated into Japanese as early as 1930, was understood immediately in your country, in contrast with the nihilistic misunderstanding of what was said which is prevalent to this day in Europe. The nothing that is talked about there means that which in relation to what-is is never any kind of being, and 'is' thus nothing, but which nevertheless determines what-is as such and is therefore called Being.

(*JH*, p. 225)

Hardly surprising, again, that Heidegger appears not to have been so surprised at the immediacy of the understanding on the part of an apparently quite alien culture. The second sentence is significant in so far as it makes explicit the fact that Heidegger's concern to elaborate an original conception of nothing that is non-nihilistic is of a piece with the issue that drives his philosophical enterprise from beginning to end: the concern to reopen the question of Being.<sup>40</sup>

In 1930 Heidegger delivered a public lecture 'On the essence of truth', which he would give frequently over the years until its publication in 1943. If this has often been regarded as one of the most enigmatic of his texts, one factor may be that it was written at a time when Heidegger was working to assimilate ideas from Daoism. In the interests of narrative continuity, it will be helpful to look briefly at this text even though it requires temporarily expanding our focus to include Chinese thought.<sup>41</sup> It may be more than simple coincidence that it was after one of the earlier presentations of this lecture, in October 1930 in Bremen, that Heidegger gave the first recorded public reading of a Daoist text: the story of the exchange between Zhuang Zi and Hui Shih on the joy of the fishes.<sup>42</sup> Petzet remarks that the occasion for Heidegger's asking his host to fetch his copy of the *Zhuang Zi* was a discussion of the question of whether it is possible to put oneself in the place of another. Petzet does not say how the discussion came out, but simply remarks that in Heidegger's reading 'the profound story put all those present under its spell'.

Heidegger had in fact been concerned with the question of putting oneself into another's place in his lecture course of the previous semester. He appears to have devoted several sessions to a discussion of the extent to which it is possible for human beings to transpose themselves into other people, animals and even stones. (Plants are not considered in this section, though there had been some talk about the vegetal realm earlier in the course). Heidegger's conclusion is that we can't transpose ourselves into stones because the stone doesn't have a world – is *weltlos*; but that we can transpose ourselves into animals since the animal does have a world – *weltarm* though it may be. He doesn't think the question should even arise in the case of other human beings, since human being is essentially 'being with [*Mitsein mit*] others' and 'being transposed [*Ver-setztsein*] into other human beings'. He even leaves open the possibility of such transposition into inanimate things – at least where human existence is attuned by *myth* and also in the case of *art*, which he characterizes as 'fundamentally different *kinds* of possible *truth*'. In view of how little reference is made to animals in the enormous Heideggerian corpus, it is significant that the only extended discussion of the animal realm should occur in these lectures from the time Heidegger was apparently involved with the *Zhuang Zi*.<sup>43</sup>

In saying all this, Heidegger could just as well be giving an interpretation of Zhuang Zi's story of the philosophers and the fishes – or indeed of the *Zhuang Zi* as a whole. One of the most striking features of that text is the remarkable number of anecdotes about animals, fishes, birds and plants (trees especially) that aim to jolt the reader out of his or her anthropocentrism and into an experiential appreciation of the perspectives of other denizens of the realm between heaven and earth. The *Zhuang Zi* is a text highly prized by the great Zen thinkers, and Heidegger could equally well be giving a reading of a text by Dôgen (or one of his successors) on the topic of the 'Buddha nature' of all living things.<sup>44</sup> It is possible, too, that Heidegger heard his Japanese visitors ascribe similar views to Nishida, who argues that in order to know something one has to *become* it. In chapter 13 of *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida writes:

That we know a thing means simply that the self coincides with the thing. In seeing a flower, the self becomes that flower. To study a flower and illumine its nature means letting go of subjective conjecture to coincide with the nature of that flower.<sup>45</sup>

To return to the essay 'On the essence of truth': it is here that Heidegger gives the first definitive formulation of an opposition that was to remain central to the subsequent development of his thinking: that between the *Stellen* (setting, placing, putting) of *Vorstellen* (representing)



and the *Lassen* (letting) of the kinds of *Denken* he proposes as preferable to the representative and calculative modes of modern European thinking. There is, in other words, a move away from the projection (*Entwurf*) of a world of potential *Zuhandenheit* to a more open stance that holds back from dictating to things in advance how they are to appear.<sup>46</sup> The consequences of such a move will be seen later in the use of terms like *Gelassenheit* and statements to the effect that it is *Sein* itself, rather than *Dasein*, that effects the historical projection of worlds.<sup>47</sup> The shift is adumbrated in the somewhat gnomic pronouncement from the beginning of the fourth section:

Freedom for what is manifest from an Open [*zum Offenbaren eines Offenens*] lets the being in question be the being that it is [*lässt das jeweilige Seiende das Seiende sein, das es ist*]. Freedom now reveals itself as letting beings be [*das Seinlassen von Seiendem*].

By a nice turn of etymological development, both the German *lassen* and the English 'let' are well suited in their ambiguity between 'allowing' and 'ordering' (letting something happen as opposed to making it happen) to translating the central Daoist notion of *wu wei* or 'nondisruptive activity'. According to the *Dao de jing*, the Daoist sage 'dwells in effecting without acting'.

Whoever acts in Dao reduces day by day;  
reduces and reduces to arrive at not-doing.  
He does not act, and yet he is not inactive.<sup>48</sup>

In the next section of 'On the essence of truth', we learn that letting-be always involves a concealing. Speaking of 'the openness of beings in totality', Heidegger writes that, 'although it constantly attunes everything, it itself remains the indeterminate, the indeterminable. . . . What attunes here is, however, not nothing, but a concealment of beings in totality.' The first chapter of the *Lao Zi* reads (translated from Wilhelm):

'Non-being' I call the beginning of heaven and earth.  
'Being' I call the mother of individual things. . . .  
In [their] unity it is called the mystery [*das Geheimnis*].  
The yet deeper mystery of the mystery  
is the gate through which all wonders issue forth.

And chapter 25:

There is a thing, completed in undifferentiation.

Before heaven and earth it was already there,  
so still, so alone. . . .

At the beginning of section 6 of his essay Heidegger writes that

the concealment of beings in totality . . . is older than any manifestation of this or that being . . . and older than letting-be itself. . . . What preserves letting-be in this relation to concealing? Nothing less than the concealment of what is concealed in totality . . . the mystery [*das Geheimnis*].

The final thrust of Heidegger's essay has the essence of truth (*das Wesen der Wahrheit*) turn into the truth of Being (*die Wahrheit des Wesens*), which in turn turns on 'the simultaneity of revealing and concealing' (sect. 7) – an idea that is central to the Daoist understanding of the reciprocal powers of *yin* and *yang* (and that also figures prominently in Nietzsche's thought). And when the essay's concluding note says that truth means 'clearing protecting [*lichtendes Bergen*]' as a basic trait of Being', it echoes a basic trait of the *dao*.

A striking feature of the *Lao Zi* is the poetry of its language, a fair amount of which can come across in translation – even though, to borrow an image from a Ming dynasty writer (quoted by Okakura), a translation is like the reverse side of a brocade: all the threads are there, but without the subtlety of the colours or the design. Indeed the texts of the *Lao Zi* and the *Zhuang Zi* are regarded by many to be among the most poetical ever written in classical Chinese (a language distinguished by the beauty of its poetry), and they are certainly two of the most poetic works of philosophy in any language. Heidegger's encounter with these texts appears to have a twofold effect on his thinking. For one thing his prose begins to change from the uncompromisingly functional language of *Sein und Zeit* to the more poetic evocations of 'On the essence of truth', and for another, he will soon begin to develop one of the major themes of his mature thinking – concerning the closeness of philosophical thought and poetry.<sup>49</sup>

In his lectures on metaphysics from the summer of 1935, Heidegger remarks that the only thing that is of the same order as philosophy and its thinking is *Dichtung*. Though they are not the same, he continues, the only people other than philosophers who are able to talk about *das Nichts* are poets. In a pronouncement that could have issued from the brush of a commentator on the thinker-poet Bashô (in whose work Heidegger developed a keen interest), he writes: 'In the poetizing of the poet and the thinking of the thinker, there is always so much world-space bestowed that in it any thing whatsoever – a tree, a mountain, a house, a bird-call – completely loses its indifference and ordinariness.'<sup>50</sup>

Heidegger's *Einführung in die Metaphysik* contains what may be the first published references to the Japanese, but they appear simply in lists of examples of *Seiendes*. But when it comes to a discussion of philosophies that have 'inquired about the ground of the things that are', no mention is made of the East-Asian traditions with which Heidegger was by that time familiar: only thinkers who think in the medium of Greek or German, 'the most powerful and spiritual language[s] with regard to the possibility of thinking'.<sup>51</sup>

The essay 'The origin of the work of art' (1936) constitutes Heidegger's first and longest meditation on the topic of art and is, as such, another manifestation of a shift in the direction of his thinking. The original stimulus for his engagement with this topic may well have been his conversations about art with Kuki Shūzō in 1927 and 1928; this essay at any rate shows the most influence from East-Asian thought among the works of the middle period. A shorthand way of showing this is to recommend a reading of my 'Thoughts on the way' – part of which was intended as an excursus on resonances between Heidegger's texts of 1935/6 and Daoist philosophical ideas – as a catalogue of the *influences* of Daoism on Heidegger's thinking of the mid-1930s.<sup>52</sup> On the assumption that Heidegger had read the Richard Wilhelm translation of the *I ching* (published in 1923), one can see his idea of truth as the *Riss* denoting the interplay of *Welt* and *Erde* as an adaptation of the notion of the *dao* as the common root of the cyclical forces of *yang/chian* and *yin/kun*.<sup>53</sup>

In the light of the discussion earlier of Kuki Shūzō's influence on Heidegger, an obscure but central passage in 'The origin of the work of art' becomes clearer. In the course of a discussion of truth as the unconcealment produced by the struggle of world and earth, Heidegger says more about the *Lichtung*, the illuminated clearing that in *Sein und Zeit* had been equated with *Dasein* and which now appears coextensive with *Sein* itself and *das Nichts*.

Beings stand in Being [*Das Seiende steht im Sein*] . . .

And yet, beyond beings – though not away from them but this side of them – something Other is happening. Amidst beings in totality there is an open space. A clearing is there. From the perspective of beings it is 'being-er' than beings [*seiender als das Seiende*]. The open middle is thus not surrounded by beings, but the central illumining clearing itself encircles – like the Nothing we hardly know – all that is.<sup>54</sup>

Here, complementary to the Daoist ideas, is the Zen Buddhist idea of nothingness: *mu*, or *kū* – emptiness, distinct but not different from form. Heidegger's *Lichtung* may be seen as the German version of Nishida's

*mu no basho*, or *topos* of nothingness. Around the time Kuki was in Freiburg, Nishida was using a striking image to express the way the *topos* of absolute nothingness envelops all the other spheres of human activity and thought: *urazukeru*, 'to be lined' (as with the lining of a garment). One could well imagine an evening at Heidegger's home, with Madame Kuki sitting resplendent by her husband's side as he talks about Zen art with the great philosopher, her ceremonial kimono allowing the East-Asian world to shine – as Heidegger himself said – 'more brightly' in the dusky environs of the Black Forest. Heidegger would be questioning his guest, once again, about the Japanese conception of nothingness. An illustration occurs to the Count, who responds in his impeccable German:

Professor Nishida uses an expression in his latest essay, 'The Intelligible World', that could perhaps help in this context. He speaks of the way nothingness 'lines' the concentric spheres of our existence, just as the kimono my wife is wearing is lined by a precious silk lining that one hardly sees, since it shows only at the ends – and which in a way envelops the kimono as a whole.<sup>55</sup>

Heidegger himself drops an enigmatic allusion to the source of 'The origin of the work of art' in a *Zusatz* he added to the essay in 1956, the year after his dialogue between the Japanese and the Inquirer. (The editor of the new edition of *Holzwege*, in which the supplement is included after the *Nachwort*, remarks that 'Heidegger repeatedly emphasized the importance of this "supplement" in conversation'.<sup>56</sup>) The *Zusatz* is concerned mainly with resolving the apparent opposition between the 'establishing of truth' (in the work of art) and a 'letting the advent of truth occur', and emphasizes that 'this *Lassen* is not any kind of passivity but' – just like *wu wei* – 'the highest kind of doing'. It is the last paragraph that is remarkable:

It remains an inevitable and distressing difficulty that the reader, who naturally comes upon the essay from the outside, immediately and in the long run thinks of and interprets its content *not from the secret source of what is to be thought* [*nicht aus dem verschwiegene[n] Quellbereich des Zudenkenden*]. For the author himself there remains the difficulty of speaking of the various stations on the way each in precisely the appropriate language. (Emphasis added)

One wonders why the source of what is to be thought should be so secret – if only because *Quelle* was the term Heidegger used the previous year in discussing the possible basis for dialogue between Western and East-Asian thought (*US*, pp. 94/8, 115/24; discussed below).

At the end of this highly productive period from 1935–6 another visitor

from Japan arrived, Nishitani Keiji, a pupil of Nishida's with an intense interest in Nietzsche. Nishitani was to stay in Germany until 1938, attending Heidegger's seminars in Freiburg and having many informal conversations with him at his home.<sup>57</sup> Nishitani has written about how in 1938 he presented Heidegger with a copy of the first volume of D. T. Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, only to find that he had already read the book and was eager to discuss it. Nishitani also reports that at that time Heidegger read an anthology of Zen texts entitled *Zen: Der lebendige Buddhismus in Japan*.<sup>58</sup> In conversation in Kyoto in 1989, Professor Nishitani recounted how not long after his arrival in Freiburg Heidegger gave him 'a standing invitation' to come to his house on Saturday afternoons to talk about Zen. Heidegger was apparently most interested in the striking imagery that characterizes so many of the traditional Zen texts, and Nishitani concurs with other East-Asian interlocutors in saying that Heidegger was always a keen and insightful questioner when it came to the topic of Asian thought.<sup>59</sup>

### 3 Oblique presentations and prognostications

In view of the amount of contact Heidegger had with East-Asian thinkers, the fact of his acquaintance with philosophical texts from that tradition, and the keen intensity with which he used to question his Japanese and Chinese interlocutors about those texts, the references to East-Asian ideas in his published works are remarkably few. There are only four instances, occurring between 1954 and 1958.

The first is the only extended discussion of East-Asian ideas in the entire Heideggerian corpus: the dialogue between the Japanese and the Inquirer, written over thirty years after the first contact with thinkers from Japan. This text itself deserves an extended discussion as a simultaneous revelation and concealment of the East-Asian influences on Heidegger's thought.<sup>60</sup> For now it will suffice to draw attention to a remark that becomes significant in the context of our discussion so far. At one point the Inquirer says to the Japanese that his visit is especially welcome since his experience in translating German literature (and Heidegger's essays on Hölderlin) into Japanese will have given him 'a keener ear for the questions that I addressed to your compatriots almost thirty-five years ago' – and adds in his next speech the understatement: 'and yet I think that in the meantime I have learned a thing or two [*einiges*] to help me inquire better than several decades ago' (*US*, p. 94/8; emphasis added). This dialogue contains the only references to Japanese ideas in Heidegger's works published in the West.

Three years later, in a discussion of the term *Ereignis* in 'Der Satz der Identität' (1957), Heidegger writes that the word 'can no more be

translated than the Greek word *logos* or the Chinese Tao'.<sup>61</sup> At the time, probably no more than one reader of the essay would have known that Heidegger was speaking from experience – having spent a summer, ten years earlier, working with a Chinese philosopher on translating chapters of the *Lao Zi* containing the word *dao*.<sup>62</sup> In 1958 Heidegger completed the essay 'Das Wesen der Sprache', in which two paragraphs on *Tao*, 'the key word in the poetic thinking of Laotse' (*US*, p. 198/92), shed light on Heidegger's frequent use of the key word *Weg* in his writings before and since. Finally, an essay 'Grundsätze des Denkens', published in a journal the same year – and not included in any subsequent edition of Heidegger's works – cites the line from the *Lao Zi*: 'Whoever knows his brightness veils himself in his darkness.'<sup>63</sup> If the jaded reader takes this as an ironical comment on Heidegger's attitude toward Light from the East, the less cynical commentator will still have to judge these few mentions of Daoist and Japanese thought as significant in their grudging paucity.

As if to supplement these scant references to Asian thought, Heidegger allows himself the occasional discussion of the possibility of dialogue between the Western and East-Asian philosophical traditions. Given his reticence concerning how much of his own thinking has appropriated from East-Asian thought, it is not surprising that one finds considerable vacillation in his position on the issue of inter-tradition dialogue.

In the essay 'Wissenschaft und Besinnung' (1953) Heidegger emphasizes that every meditation on the present situation must be rooted in 'our historical *Dasein*' by way of 'a dialogue with the Greek thinkers and their language' – and laments that such a dialogue has not yet begun.<sup>64</sup> He then adds, almost in passing: '[This dialogue] has hardly even been prepared yet, and remains in turn the precondition for our inevitable dialogue with the East-Asian world.' Despite its putative inevitability, doubts as to the very possibility of such a dialogue – based on the consideration that if language is the house of Being, 'we Europeans presumably inhabit a quite different house from the East-Asians' (*US*, p. 90/5) – are expressed by the Inquirer in the dialogue of 1954:

I do not yet see whether what I am trying to think as the essential nature [*Wesen*] of language is *also* adequate to the nature of East-Asian language – whether in the end, which would at the same time be the beginning, thinking experience can be reached by an essence of language that would ensure that Western European and East-Asian saying can enter into dialogue in such a way that there sings something that wells up from a single source [*Quelle*].

(*US*, p. 94/8)

Later in the conversation the Inquirer appears to be more sure that 'for East-Asian and European peoples the essential nature of language [*Sprachwesen*] remains quite different' (*US*, p. 113/23). The Japanese visitor, however, seems decidedly more sanguine. In talking about his experience of translating Heidegger's essay on Hölderlin's *Heimkunft* and some poems by Kleist, he says:

In the course of the translating it often seemed as if I were wandering back and forth between two different language-essences, and yet in such a way that every now and then something shone forth that made me think that the essential source [*Wesensquell*] of fundamentally different languages might be the same.

(*US*, p. 115/24)

Since 'the Japanese' in this dialogue is at least 90 per cent Heidegger, we can understand this discrepancy as representing ambivalence on the part of the author rather than a burst of objective reportage or a sudden ability to write dramatic dialogue.

The following year, in the context of a discussion of the possibility of 'planetary thinking' in 'Zur Seinsfrage', Heidegger remarks that neither side is equal yet to the encounters that the cultivation of planetary thinking will require: 'This holds equally for the European and East-Asian languages, and above all for the realm of their possible dialogue. Neither of them can by itself open up and ground this realm' (*Wegmarken*, p. 252). A hint of how this realm might begin to be opened up is given in a passage from the 1959 essay 'Hölderlins Erde und Himmel', where Heidegger speaks in vatic tones of the 'great beginning' of Western thought.

There can of course be no going back to it. Present as something waiting over against us, the great beginning becomes something small. But nor can this small something remain any longer in its Western isolation. It is opening itself to the few other great beginnings that belong with their Own to the Same of the beginning of the infinite relationship, in which the earth is included.<sup>65</sup>

The opening anticipated here must at the very least be an opening to the 'great beginning' of East-Asian thought, wherever one locates it.

There is more talk of beginnings in the open letter of 1963 to Kojima Takehiko, where Heidegger writes of the necessity for a 'step back' (*der Schritt zurück*) if human beings are to escape the domination of *das Stellen* and find the way by which they can come into their own:

The step back does not mean a flight of thinking into bygone ages,

and least of all a reanimation of the beginnings of Western philosophy. . . . The step back is rather the step out of the track in which the progress and regress of *Bestellen* take place.

(*JH*, p. 224)

It is in the next paragraph of this letter that Heidegger talks about the immediate comprehension in Japan of his discussion of nothingness in 'What is metaphysics?' – which suggests that the step out of the progress–regress opposition that might be accomplished by our opening up to another great beginning could take us into the realm of nothingness as emptiness. This surmise is confirmed by a comment at the end of the letter, where he alludes to the possibility of a contemplative reconciliation with 'the still hidden mystery of the power of *Stellen*', which 'is no longer to be accomplished by Western European philosophy up till now, but also not without it – that is, not unless its newly appropriated tradition is brought on to the appropriate path' (*JH*, p. 226). Again the implication is that the reappropriation of the Western philosophical tradition will require a preliminary move out of it, optimally by way of a tradition untouched by the metaphysical ideas that gave rise to the modern Western world view.

Heidegger's next move with respect to this issue seems to be something of a *Schritt zurück*. In the 1966 interview that was posthumously published in *Der Spiegel*, his posture toward possible East–West philosophical dialogue appears negative and hints at a Eurocentric isolationism:

I am convinced that it is only from the same part of the world in which the world of modern technology arose that a reversal can come about, and that it cannot happen by way of an adoption of Zen Buddhism or any other oriental experience of the world. In order to think differently we need the help of the European tradition and a reappropriation of it. Thinking is only transformed by a thinking that is of the same descent and provenance.<sup>66</sup>

The rejection of a wholesale substitution of Eastern wisdom for Western thinking is clearly unobjectionable. Nevertheless, quite apart from the question of how much Heidegger himself had 'adopted' from Zen Buddhism, the talk of a unilateral reappropriation of the European tradition rings somewhat hollow in view of the preceding pronouncements concerning the *unfeasibility* of precisely that – and the desirability of a bilateral approach involving East-Asian thought. One could have hoped for a more charitable attitude toward the possibility of our learning *something* from the Zen Buddhist tradition.

Suspensions that Heidegger may be speaking differently to a domestic audience and to the Japanese are confirmed by a passage written in 1968,



which appears to be his last remark on the topic. He is again optimistic about the possibility of opening up a realm for thinking dialogue between the cultures. In the foreword to the Japanese translation of his lecture 'Zur Frage nach der Bestimmung der Sache des Denkens', he writes:

By thinking the clearing and characterizing it adequately, we reach a realm that can perhaps make it possible to bring a transformed European thinking into a fruitful engagement with East-Asian 'thinking'. Such an engagement could help with the task of saving the essential nature of human being from the threat of an extreme technological reduction and manipulation of human *Dasein*.<sup>67</sup>

Given the importance of that task, and Heidegger's dialogue with Japanese philosophers over a period of forty years, one would like to read the quotation marks around the second 'thinking' not as indicative of second-rate thoughts but as acknowledging a difference between equals – so that we could take this last word on the topic as definitive.

What are we to make of all this? In the course of putting together *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, I had the opportunity for a conversation with H.-G. Gadamer. I asked him why, in view of Heidegger's long-term acquaintance with and enthusiasm for Daoist thought (the question and response apply equally well to the case of Zen), there were so few mentions of Daoism in his published texts. He replied that a scholar of Heidegger's generation and calibre would be reluctant to write anything about a philosophy if he were unable to read the relevant texts in the original language. In view of the foregoing exposition, this response may seem disingenuous. It is, of course, possible to understand Heidegger's reticence as stemming from an intellectual modesty, from his being unsure whether he really understands these ideas from an alien tradition couched in a language he doesn't know. But on the other hand, he did have numerous opportunities (which he apparently seized with alacrity) to question several of the greatest Japanese thinkers of the century precisely about the basic philosophical ideas of the East-Asian tradition.

As mentioned at the outset, more research needs to be done in order to flesh out that part of the evidence that is at present circumstantial. In view of the success with which Heidegger's translation work on the *Lao Zi* was kept secret, little of substance is to be expected from his *Nachlass*, though records of books checked out from university libraries might provide pertinent information – as could, on the Japanese side, a perusal of diaries and letters written by the earlier Japanese visitors. It would be interesting, too, to learn the reactions of contemporary Heidegger scholars in Japan to the suggestion that the sympathetic resonances – so often remarked upon there – between Heidegger's thought and ideas

from the Japanese tradition may be due in part to his having been influenced by such ideas. If this possibility has not been seriously entertained in Japan, it is because of the awe in which Heidegger has traditionally been held there – and the thinker's guarded silence on the matter.

None of this preliminary presentation is intended to deny that Heidegger produced what may be the most profound, complex and influential philosophy of the twentieth century: the question is whether the provenance of that philosophy is as exclusively Graeco-Teutonic as its author would have us believe. Even at this stage of the investigation, the conclusion is unavoidable that Heidegger was less than generous in acknowledging how much he learned from the East-Asian (and especially the Japanese) tradition.<sup>68</sup> But what is most important here are the implications for how we read Heidegger's texts – especially as more and more comparative studies are undertaken, but also in the context of the Western tradition *simpliciter*. The possibility that he may have absorbed a considerable amount from a philosophical tradition that is relentlessly *unmetaphysical* prompts at the very least the adoption of a different perspective on Heidegger's claims – however justified they may be – to have overcome or subverted the tradition of Western metaphysics.

## Notes

1 A notable treatment of the topic is Otto Pöggeler, 'West-East dialogue: Heidegger and Lao-tzu', in Graham Parkes (ed.), *Heidegger and Asian Thought* (Honolulu, 1987 – henceforth abbreviated as *HAT*), pp. 47–78, the range of which is considerably broader than the subtitle might suggest. The only extended study to have appeared so far is Reinhard May, *Ex oriente lux: Heideggers Werk unter ostasiatischem Einfluss* (Wiesbaden, 1989 – hereafter *EOL*). As the subtitle suggests, the book is restricted to the influence of *East-Asian* (Chinese and Japanese) ideas on Heidegger's thought; but then Heidegger appears to have had relatively little interest in Indian philosophy. Though some might find a few of its conclusions overdrawn, May's study is required reading for anyone interested in the sources of Heidegger's thinking. Since the main weight of this work is on the Chinese side, the present essay will place complementary emphasis on Japanese thought.

2 This is suggested by Hartmut Buchner in the introductory essay to his anthology *Japan und Heidegger* (Sigmaringen, 1989 – henceforth *JH*). This collection is an invaluable source on the relations between Heidegger and Japanese philosophers. Translations from this and other German texts will be my own.

3 Japanese and Chinese names will be given in the East-Asian order: family name first. Yamanouchi is cited as the first Japanese to study with Heidegger by one of his later students, Tsujimura Kôichi, in his speech on the occasion of Heidegger's sixtieth birthday (reprinted in *JH*, pp. 159–65).

4 There are now two English translations of this text, which will be referred to shortly: *A Study of Good*, tr. Valdo Viglielmo (Tokyo, 1960), and *An Inquiry into the Good*, tr. Masao Abe and Christopher Ives (New Haven and London, 1990). It may be fair to say that Nishida is the only major figure in Japanese

philosophy of the first half of the twentieth century *not* to have been deeply influenced by Heidegger (perhaps in part because he was twenty years Heidegger's senior).

5 See the discussion of Yamanouchi's critique in Nishitani Keiji, *Nishida Kitarô*, tr. Yamamoto Seisaku and James W. Heisig (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, 1991), pp. 198–205.

6 A brief account of Miki's relations with Heidegger can be found in Yuasa Yasuo, 'Modern Japanese philosophy and Heidegger', in *HAT*, pp. 155–74.

7 Ohashi Ryôsuke, 'Die frühe Heidegger-Rezeption in Japan', in *JH*, pp. 23–37, 27.

8 See Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe (GA)* 20 (Frankfurt, 1979), p. 403. Here the nothingness of *die Welt* is related, by way of the revelatory phenomenon of *Angst*, to the absolute nothingness of death in a way that prefigures the classic treatment in *Sein und Zeit* (§§49, 53, 57, 68b).

9 Heidegger, *GA* 61, pp. 143–8.

10 *GA* 63, pp. 31–2.

11 The only book of Tanabe's available in English translation is *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, tr. Takeuchi Yoshinori with Valdo Viglielmo and James W. Heisig (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1986). A good collection of essays on one aspect of his multi-faceted thought is Taitetsu Unno and James W. Heisig (eds), *The Religious Philosophy of Tanabe Hajime: The Metanoetic Imperative* (Berkeley, 1990).

12 See *JH*, pp. 181–8. Yuasa (in *HAT*) discusses Tanabe only briefly, and his judgment that the influence of Heidegger on Tanabe is 'relatively small' may understate the case. Tsujimura Kôichi's claim that Tanabe maintained 'a thinking dialogue with Heidegger's thought until his [Tanabe's] death in 1962' (*JH*, p. 159) seems closer to the mark. See, for example, the references to Heidegger in Tanabe, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, and also the brief discussion of Heidegger's influence on Tanabe by Ohashi in *JH*, pp. 25–6.

13 'Benshōgaku ni okeru atarashiki tenkō: Haideggah no sei no genshōgaku', *Shisō* (Tokyo), October 1924. A German translation of this essay can be found in *JH*, pp. 89–108.

14 Heidegger, *GA* 63, p. 114.

15 My friend Charles Guignon has made the very plausible suggestion that Heidegger's taking up the issue of death may also have been prompted by his reading of Luther around this period. Given Tanabe's interest in Christianity, this consideration would make it all the more likely that the two thinkers would spark one another's interest in the topic of death.

16 Tanabe Hajime, 'Todesdialektik', in *Martin Heidegger zum siebzigsten Geburtstag: Festschrift* (Pfullingen, 1959), pp. 93–133.

17 See Hans Waldenfels, *Absolute Nothingness*, tr. J. W. Heisig (New York, 1980), pp. 37–9. Nishida practised Zen meditation regularly during the ten years leading up to the publication of *An Inquiry into the Good* – although he apparently gave up formal sitting as he began to develop his own philosophy. The characterization of his enterprise as the attempt to work out a new philosophy of Zen Buddhism in Western philosophical terms is perhaps too simple, but it is not misleading.

18 See Nishitani, *Nishida Kitarô*, chap. 9, 'The philosophy of Nishida and Tanabe'.

19 See the foreword by James Heisig to Tanabe, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, p. xi.

20 Nishida, *An Inquiry into the Good*, chap. 14 (James Heisig's translation in Waldenfels, *Absolute Nothingness*, pp. 40–1).

21 Nishida, *An Inquiry into the Good*, chap. 31 (Heisig translation, p. 41). Nishida's understanding of God, conditioned as it is by the Buddhist idea of *mu*, is one Heidegger would not have found uncongenial.

22 G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Book I, sect. 1, chap. 1, C. *Werden*, 1. 'Einheit des Seins und Nichts', and *Anmerkung* 1. Heidegger quotes the first sentence with approval, though not without qualification, near the end of the essay 'Was ist Metaphysik?'

23 Quoted by May in *EOL*, p. 45. May also points out that Martin Buber writes in his edition of *Zhuang Zi* that Lao Zi 'overcomes the official wisdom [of his age] with his doctrine of "non-being"' (*Reden und Gleichnisse des Tschuang-Tse*, deutsche Auswahl von Martin Buber (Zürich, 1951), p. 185).

24 Max Scheler, 'Vom Wesen der Philosophie', in *Vom Ewigen im Menschen*, in *Gesammelte Werke* (Bern, 1954), vol. 5, p. 93.

25 Scheler, 'Probleme der Religion', in *Vom Ewigen im Menschen*, pp. 263–4.

26 Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen, 1959), p. 131; *On the Way to Language*, tr. Peter D. Hertz (New York, 1971), p. 37 (hereafter abbreviated as *US* followed by the page numbers of the German original and the English translation). The Inquirer says earlier (*US*, pp. 87/3) that he often discussed this question with Kuki Shūzō – whom we are about to meet.

27 Kuki then went back to Paris, and it was then that he came to know the young Jean-Paul Sartre. On this relationship, and other information about Kuki, see Stephen Light, *Shūzō Kuki and Jean-Paul Sartre* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1987 – hereafter *KS*), which also contains translations of some of Kuki's brief essays from the period just before he met Heidegger.

28 This acquaintance came at least in part from Tanabe's 1924 essay on Heidegger. See Ohashi in *JH*, p. 29.

29 According to the account of the original interlocutor, Professor Tezuka of Tokyo University, while Heidegger spoke of Kuki in the warmest terms, they spoke of him only briefly at the beginning of their talk – and Kuki's notion of *iki* was not a topic of conversation at all. Although Heidegger (in the *Hinweise in Unterwegs zur Sprache*) gives the date of composition of the dialogue as 1953/4, Tezuka's visit actually took place at the end of March 1954. Tezuka's account of the conversation, 'Haideggah to no ichi jikan' ('An hour with Heidegger'), is reprinted in the original Japanese with a German translation in *EOL*, pp. 81–99, and a different German translation is included in *JH*, pp. 173–80. Stephen Light cites a report to the effect that in 1957 Heidegger expressed (to Tsujimura Kōichi) his desire to write a preface to an anticipated German translation of one of Kuki's books – a significant desire when one considers that by that time Heidegger can hardly have been casting around for books to write prefaces for.

30 The final version of Kuki's best known work, '*Iki*' no *kōzō* (*The Structure of 'Iki'*), was first published in the journal *Shisō* in early 1929 and issued as a book the following year.

31 The texts of these lectures were published as a book, *Propos sur le temps*, in Paris in 1928; English translations can be found in *KS*, pp. 43–67. Kuki's mention of Heidegger's theory of temporality at the beginning of the first talk constitutes one of the earliest introductions of Heidegger's ideas in France – the discussion of which was later to become a major industry.

32 Imamichi Tomonobu, *Betrachtungen über das Eine* (Tokyo, 1968), p. 154. Okakura uses the term with reference to Daoism, calling it 'the art of being in the world' (see the chapter 'Taoism and Zennism' in *The Book of Tea*). Heinrich

Petzet quotes Okakura in the context of a discussion of Heidegger's acquaintance with Asian thought, though he does not say explicitly that Heidegger was acquainted with his writings; see Heinrich Wiegand Petzet, *Auf einen Stern zugehen: Begegnungen mit Martin Heidegger 1929–76* (Frankfurt, 1983), p. 177. Petzet does make it clear that Heidegger came to be very interested in Chinese and Japanese art, and he relates how, when he (Petzet) had to write a review of a large exhibition of Zen paintings and drawings, Heidegger 'brought [his] attention to the literature on the subject that seemed to him important' (ibid., pp. 178–9).

33 The discussion in the dialogue with the Japanese about the pregnant gestures of Noh drama, where the Japanese demonstrates a gesture evoking a mountain landscape (*US*, pp. 107–18), echoes a line in Kuki's *propos* on Japanese theatre: 'Hands shading the eyes will make one think of a mountain landscape' (*KS*, p. 75 – Kuki is actually quoting from a French commentary: Albert Maybon, *Le théâtre japonais* (Paris, 1925)).

34 *Lao-Tse's Tao Te King*, translated from the Chinese, with Introduction and Commentary by Victor Von Strauss (Leipzig, 1870). Heidegger actually refers to this translation in an article published in a journal in 1958; see below, note 63. This edition, by the way, is probably the textual basis for Nietzsche's occasional remarks about Lao Zi. On the topic of Nietzsche and Asian thought, see Graham Parkes (ed.), *Nietzsche and Asian Thought* (Chicago, 1991).

35 *Reden und Gleichnisse des Tschuang-Tse*, tr. Buber (Leipzig, 1910). On Heidegger's familiarity with this text, see Petzet, *Auf einem Stern zugehen*, pp. 23–4; and also the discussions by Pöggeler and Parkes in *HAT*, pp. 52–6 and 105ff.

36 *Laotse, Tao te king: Das Buch des Alten vom Sinn und Leben*, translated from the Chinese with comments by Richard Wilhelm (Jena, 1911); *Dschuang Dsi: Das wahre Buch vom südlichen Blütenland*, translated from the Chinese with comments by Richard Wilhelm (Jena, 1912). Petzet, *Auf einem Stern zugehen* (p. 183) reports Heidegger's admitting to being a reader of Lao Zi and that he only knew the text through the mediation of Richard Wilhelm.

37 *Was ist Metaphysik?* (Frankfurt, 1969), p. 32. Page references in the next two paragraphs will be to this (tenth) edition.

38 Von Strauss translates: 'Denn/Seyn und Nichtseyn einander gebären', and Wilhelm: 'Denn Sein und Nichtsein erzeugen einander'; see, especially, Buber's *Reden*, pp. 62–71.

39 *Dao de jing*, chap. 4 (Von Strauss); chap. 4 (Wilhelm); chap. 14 (Von Strauss).

40 Both these themes are adumbrated in the dialogue with the Japanese, which was written the year before Kojima's visit. After a discussion of the emptiness (*Leere*) of the stage used in Noh drama, there is the following exchange:

*Inquirer*: The emptiness is then the same as nothingness, that Being [*jenes Wesende*] which we try to think as the Other to all presence and absence.

*Japanese*: Certainly. That is why we in Japan immediately understood the lecture 'What is Metaphysics?' when it reached us in translation in 1930. . . .

We are still amazed that the Europeans could misinterpret the nothingness discussed in that lecture in a nihilistic way. For us emptiness is the highest name for that which you would like to speak of with the word 'Being' . . .

41 It is important to bear in mind that Daoist ideas are an important element

in the development of Zen thought, in so far as Zen has its roots in Chinese (Chan) Buddhism and the Chinese assimilation of Indian Buddhism involved the incorporation of ideas from the indigenous philosophy. A consideration of Daoism at this point will also serve to fill out the picture given by May in *EOL*.

42 *Zhuang Zi*, chap. 17, in Buber, *Reden*, 'Die Freude der Fische', pp. 124–5. The best English translation, philosophically speaking, is A. C. Graham, *Chuang-tzu: The Inner Chapters* (London, 1981), p. 123. For a first-hand account of Heidegger's recitation of the text, see Petzet, *Auf einem Stern zugehen*, p. 24.

43 Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* (GA 29/30), pp. 295–310 (quotations from pp. 300 and 301). The discussion of the animal realm ranges from pp. 261–388. My colleague Ronald Bontekoe has pointed out that there are, of course, two thinkers from the German tradition who had dealt similarly with the question of the transposition of awareness: Wilhelm Dilthey and Max Scheler (with both of whose work Heidegger was familiar at this time). As in the cases of death and nothingness, I would like to suggest that influence from the Western tradition was complemented by East-Asian sources.

44 For a comparison of some ideas in Heidegger and Dögen, see Graham Parkes, 'Dögen/Heidegger/Dögen', *Philosophy East and West*, 37 (1987), pp. 437–54.

45 Nishitani, *Nishida Kitarō*, p. 116. The context of Nishitani's discussion of this passage in Nishida is interesting for the parallels it suggests with Heidegger.

46 There are very few uses of the verb *lassen* in *Sein und Zeit*, and most of those are in the compound *bewendenlassen* which refers to situating things in a context of *Zuhandenheit*.

47 *Brief über den Humanismus*, in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt, 1967), pp. 168, 180.

48 *Dao de jing*, chap. 2 (tr. from Wilhelm) and chap. 48 (Von Strauss). The term *wu wei* occurs in eight other chapters of the *Dao de jing*: 3, 10, 37, 38, 43, 57, 63, 64.

49 It is also around this time, in the mid-1930s, that Heidegger turns his attention to the poetry of Hölderlin – the first of several German poets whose work will inspire his philosophical thinking. Later, in the *Letter on Humanism*, he writes: 'We have hardly begun to think the mysterious relations to the East that have been given voice in Hölderlin's poetry' (*Wegmarken*, p. 169). My colleague Manfred Henningsen has suggested that Heidegger's turn to Hölderlin was in part a reaction against the events of 1933–4 and a defence against the subsequent co-option of his work by the National Socialists. See, also, Otto Pöggeler's discussion of Heidegger's interest in the poets in the light of his acquaintance with Daoism (*HAT*, pp. 62–8).

50 Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Tübingen, 1966), p. 20; *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, tr. Ralph Manheim (New Haven, 1953), p. 26. Heidegger's keen interest in Bashō is attested by Tezuka Tomio (*JH*, pp. 174, 179) and Tsujimura Kōichi (*JH*, p. 265). See also the discussion of Bashō in a Heideggerian context in Michiko Yoneda, *Gespräch und Dichtung: Ein Auseinandersetzungsvorversuch der Sprachauffassung Heideggers mit einem japanischem Sagen* (Frankfurt, 1984), pp. 186–225.

51 Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, pp. 58, 29, 43; *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, pp. 76, 38, 57. For further discussion of this topic, see Graham Parkes, 'From nationalism to nomadism: wondering about the languages of philosophy', in Eliot Deutsch (ed.), *Culture and Modernity: East and West* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), pp. 455–67.

52 Graham Parkes, 'Thoughts on the Way: *Being and Time* via Lao-Chuang',

in *HAT*, pp. 105–44, especially the ‘Epilogue’. Footnote 9 stands in need of revision: as Reinhard May has pointed out, the Buber edition of the *Zhuang Zi* was first published in 1910, not 1921; and so there was ample time for Heidegger to discover the text (perhaps as a result of his talks with Kuki Shūzō) and assimilate its ideas by the time he wrote his own texts of the mid-1930s.

53 See Richard Wilhelm, *I Ging: Das Buch der Wandlungen* (Düsseldorf, 1970), pp. 14–16, 25, 30, 272–6. The assumption that Heidegger had read the *I jing* is not necessary: he could have gleaned an adequate sense of the ideas in question from his readings of the other Daoist classics, and especially from the commentaries of the translators or editors.

54 ‘Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes’, in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt, 1972), p. 41; *Poetry, Language, Thought*, tr. Albert Hofstadter (New York, 1975), p. 53.

55 See ‘lining’ in the glossary of Robert Schinzinger’s translation of Kitarō Nishida: *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness* (Honolulu, 1966), which includes a translation of the 1928 essay ‘Eichiteki sekai’ where this expression occurs. Since Kuki mentions Nishida several times in his *propos* of 1928 – in ‘Bergson in Japan’ (*KS*, p. 72) and at the end of ‘General characteristics of French philosophy’ (*KS*, p. 97) – he surely discussed Nishida in his talks with Heidegger. D. T. Suzuki reports that in a conversation with Heidegger in 1953 he asked him what he thought of Nishida’s philosophy; Heidegger’s response was: ‘Nishida is Western’ (‘Erinnerung an einen Besuch bei Martin Heidegger’, in *JH*, pp. 169–72). Since only four essays by Nishida had appeared in German at the time – three of them in a well-nigh unintelligible translation – this judgment of Heidegger’s was probably based on conversations about Nishida with his Japanese visitors.

56 Heidegger, *GA* 5, pp. 70–4; editor’s note, p. 377. I am grateful to a correspondent, Holger Krüger of Essen, for bringing the following remark from the *Zusatz* to my attention.

57 Two of Nishitani’s works containing some discussion of Heidegger have been translated: *Religion and Nothingness*, tr. Jan Van Bragt (Berkeley and London, 1982), and *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, tr. Graham Parkes with Setsuko Aihara (Albany, 1990). This latter text devotes an entire chapter to Heidegger’s thought, although – written a dozen or so years earlier than *Religion and Nothingness* – the Heidegger in it appears comparatively ‘undigested’.

58 *Zen: Der lebendige Buddhismus in Japan*, ausgewählte Stücke des Zen-Textes, tr. Schuej Ohasama (Ohazama Shuei), ed. August Faust, with a foreword by Rudolf Otto (Gotha/Stuttgart, 1925). See also Parkes, ‘Introduction’ in *HAT*, pp. 9–10.

59 In an appendix to the Japanese translation of ‘Aus einem Gespräch von der Sprache’, Tezuka Tomio recalls how during his meeting with Heidegger in 1954, the latter brought the conversation around to a *haiku* by Bashō he had read in translation:

He asked me about the poem in Japanese and posed a number of perspicacious questions about the special nature of Japanese thought as it manifests in language and in art. During my rather inept explanations it seemed as if various thoughts occurred in rapid succession to this prominent thinker. He took notes with great zeal.

(*JH*, p. 179)

See also the remarks by Paul Shih-yi Hsiao in *HAT*, p. 98.

60 See May’s discussion in *EOL*, especially pp. 25–36; also Yoneda, pp. 88–96.

As mentioned earlier, Tezuka Tomio's account of the conversation is indispensable for an informed reading of Heidegger's dialogue. Yoneda (p. 91) cites a note appended by Tezuka to his Japanese translation of the text, in which Tezuka says that he did not know Kuki personally or attend his lectures, that he himself was actually not very conversant with Heidegger's writings, and that he could not have uttered many of the things ascribed to the visitor from Japan.

61 *Identität und Differenz* (Pfullingen, 1957), p. 25; *Identity and Difference* (New York, 1969), p. 36.

62 See Paul Shih-yi Hsiao, 'Heidegger and our translation of the *Tao Te Ching*', in *HAT*, pp. 93–104. On how well kept a secret this translation work was until Heidegger's death, see *EOL*, p. 19, n. 37. This secrecy may account for the fact – strange in view of how much of Heidegger's *Nachlass* has been preserved – that no written record of his summer's work with Professor Hsiao has been found.

63 'Grundsätze des Denkens', *Jahrbuch für Psychologie und Psychotherapie*, 6 (1958), pp. 33–41. Heidegger cites chap. XVIII of the Victor von Strauss translation, but the lines in question occur in chap. XXVIII.

64 *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen, 1967), I, p. 39; 'Science and reflection', in *The Question concerning Technology and Other Essays*, tr. William Lovitt (New York, 1977), p. 158.

65 'Hölderlins Erde und Himmel', *Hölderlin-Jahrbuch*, 11 (1958–60), p. 36; quoted in *EOL*, p. 68.

66 'Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten' (1966), reprinted in G. Neske (ed.), *Antwort: Martin Heidegger im Gespräch* (Pfullingen, 1988), p. 107.

67 *Kôza-Zen*, 8 (Tokyo, 1968), pp. 321f.; reprinted in *JH*, pp. 230–1.

68 Hans A. Fischer-Barnicol reports that Heidegger once said to him, after remarking that from early on he had worked with Japanese philosophers, that 'he had nevertheless learned more from Chinese [visitors]' (*Erinnerung an Martin Heidegger*, ed. Günther Neske (Pfullingen, 1977), p. 102). This is an extraordinary remark for Heidegger to have made – and perhaps a revealing one – in view of the fact that none of his Chinese visitors came close, as philosophers, to the calibre of Tanabe, Miki, Kuki or Nishitani.



## Does the saving power also grow? Heidegger's last paths

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Otto Pöggeler

The one hundredth anniversary of Martin Heidegger's birth is also a conspicuous reminder that Heidegger's life slips ever more deeply into the past. In order for Heidegger's thought to have an influence, the tasks towards which he sought an approach must first be more clearly understood. Through his publications Heidegger exerted an influence upon people who never had personal contact with him. The force of the appeal lay in the concentrated earnest with which he forced himself and fellow philosophers into the decisive questions of human life. The systematic elaborations remained fragments; the confrontation with the history of thinking was the contrary of historical erudition, but also often an overlooking of concrete historical reality. Yet Heidegger's effect was due to the impetus he stimulated and he thereby elicited significant accomplishments from others: work as various as the new theological approach of the Bultmann school and Oskar Becker's philosophy of mathematics or the work on the metaphysical tradition and the relation to a painter like Cézanne. In the conversations which extended beyond the preliminaries of the first hours, Heidegger tried to steer his interlocutor towards his own path. For that reason the best encounters with Heidegger perhaps have been such conversations.

Each person takes from these conversations that which corresponds to his or her own horizon of expectations. Conversations across several days in Freiburg in 1959 and 1961 helped me of course above all to prepare the presentation which then appeared in 1963 as *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers*.<sup>1</sup> Since this presentation was originally supposed to contain also a second part with confrontations on several exemplary topics, I submitted for discussion for example (each time after consulting with Oskar Becker in Bonn) the question of whether Heidegger did not overlook the achievements of mathematics and thereby also portray technology in a skewed light. Heidegger was so interested by these questions

that he sought out Becker in Bonn for a personal conversation.<sup>2</sup> In terms of art, Heidegger above all commented on Paul Klee in our conversations, and I in turn alluded to the lyric poetry of Paul Celan. However, my question concerning certain formulations in Hölderlin's hymn 'Der Einzige' made it clear for me that Heidegger did not follow Hölderlin's last steps. During a return visit (which was enriched by the presence of Keji Nishitani) Heidegger read us his 1964 lecture 'Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens';<sup>3</sup> the visit concluded with Heidegger reading the 'Eisgeschichte' from Stifter's story 'Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters'.<sup>4</sup> The celebration of Heidegger's eightieth birthday in the Heidelberg Akademie took place (after Heidegger suffered a serious illness) at a time which had lost contact with Heidegger's questions, and therefore placed academic discussions in the foreground. The conversational openness was again present in the last personal meeting in the Spring of 1972. Because of American experiences, but also due to German initiatives, I raised the question of whether the scientific-technical world by its own constitution could come to a test of the necessary and the dangerous; Heidegger's resolute exhortation was to position oneself immediately in the confrontation with this world – without the detour into digressive and deferring discussions of the 'history of Being'. The liveliest attention and agreement centred on considerations of the relationship of Paul Celan to Friedrich Hölderlin. Heidegger was contemplating undertaking an edition of his works. Was Heidegger not exterior to the impetus of the times? Shortly before his death, I thought I'd bid him farewell in an appropriate fashion with a greeting from Delphi.

When Heidegger edited his Nietzsche lectures and texts,<sup>5</sup> he finally gave up the attempt to produce the documented path of his thinking in a larger introduction. With that it was clear that it wasn't Heidegger's concern to comprehend retrospectively the path of his thought and to relate it to the themes and questions of the present. Rather he sought to develop further his thought in the immediate confrontation with the specific questions already posed. In 1959–60 the 70-year-old philosopher left no doubt that his task lay before him: to provide that essential main work, for which he had collected all his thoughts, but for which he lacked a language. The lecture 'Der Weg zur Sprache' of 1959<sup>6</sup> says of Wilhelm Humboldt that he worked on his study of the diversity of human language, according to his brother, 'alone, in the vicinity of a *grave*' until his own death. Humboldt was able to find a popular influence through his letters to a friend and through his sonnets; yet the pioneering treatise always lay ahead. Are we lacking Heidegger's last work? Seminar protocols and occasional writings indicate yet another modification of approach; moreover Heidegger left behind him a wealth of drafts and notes. Yet is that an *opus posthumous*? We cannot yet know the answer.

In his first forays, Heidegger had combined the metaphysics of med-

ieval Aristotelianism with Kant and Hegel. However, by the First World War he was already concerned with a hermeneutic of factual experience of life and wanted to develop it by means of a remodelling of phenomenological philosophy. Aristotle could be a teacher in a new way, since, in the sixth book of the *Nichomachean Ethics*, he also ascribed to the situational orientation here under the changing moon an *aletheuein* and therefore a particular *logos*. Could a formal-indicative hermeneutic, an existential conceptuality, provide access to the situation, even to the liminal situation (*Grenzsituation*) and the unavailable *kairos*? With this the question of Being and time was raised anew. Yet in 1929 Heidegger earnestly proposed that the guiding sense (*Sinn*) of Being in Aristotle must not be defined as *ousia* (as Brentano maintained), but rather as *energeia*, which bears in it potential and therefore is a being-at-work (*Am-Werk-sein*). Doesn't this being-at-work assert itself as unbridled technology, as the total mobilization of all energies, as Ernst Jünger suggested? Does man touch the mythical, which gives his life meaning, perhaps only still in art, which has not shed its cultic rootedness? Heraclitus, so imputes Heidegger, posed the question of a Being, which (somewhat as the linguistic root indicates, in that it still bears the 'I am') is also at once a Becoming – namely that *physis* to which the *aletheia* belongs. Nietzsche alluded to this dimension when he conceived of that which is particularly Greek as the antagonism between the Dionysian and the Apollonian, i.e. when he wanted to wrest the forms of Being from Becoming itself. Hölderlin developed this approach more purely, in that he comprehended the eternity of the divine as the 'stride past' (*Vorbeigang*), which always has its own respective place and hour, and therefore cannot be opposed to time. When the struggle of the great totalitarianisms for world domination openly took the stage in the Second World War, Heidegger in the Nietzsche lectures of 1940 no longer analysed 'Idealism' as the failure of truth, but rather 'Nihilism'. The 'seinsgeschichtliche Bestimmung des Nihilismus'<sup>7</sup> from the sombre years of 1944–6 appears to combine Nothing and Being in an almost mystical fashion. What 'mystical' might mean here Heidegger clarified for himself when he began to translate Lao-Tzu in 1946–7. And thus from the Bremen lectures of 1949<sup>8</sup> onward he could interpret the world in its contemporary constellations from the antagonism of 'enframing' (*Gestell*) and 'the fourfold' (*Geviert*). Is that which is here called *Gestell* still conceptualized from that disposal (*Verfügung*) of being (*das Seiende*) in the representing (*Vorstellen*) and delivering (*Zustellen*) of Being, which Husserl treated as the original foundation of philosophy through Plato and Descartes? How can the co-presence of the divine and the mortal in the fourfold today indicate the saving power (*das Rettende*)? Obviously Heidegger felt himself called upon by the age to rethink yet again his

philosophical approach, namely to juxtapose art to world civilization and its technology or 'artificial intelligence' in a new way.

Though it remains today still premature to say anything completely reliable about the paths taken by Heidegger in the last twelve years of his life, this paper will briefly consider two texts from this period: the *Spiegel* interview of 1966 and the Athens speech of 1967. With all the provisionality rightly reserved for the genre of the discussion, these texts will be used to put a question to Heidegger's thought: does the care (*Sorge*) for the proper (*das Eigene*) and the authentic (*das Eigentliche*) not lead to the premature rejection of the contemporary world as a closed structure (*Verschlossenheitszusammenhang*), and thereby as well to an inappropriate definition of the co-operation (*Miteinander*) of art and technology? When Heidegger used the fame which *Being and Time* brought him to break out of academic philosophy, this question of art and technology as a decisive one had fallen to him. The following reflections should make clear that Heidegger even on his final path yet again thought through this question anew.

## I Two late texts

On 23 September 1966, three days before his seventy-seventh birthday, Heidegger was interviewed by the news-magazine *Der Spiegel*. According to the agreement the text was to be published only after the philosopher's death; at that time it had a worldwide echo as scarcely any other text.<sup>9</sup> A passage from the discussion's minutes, which was replaced by a less personal formulation at Heidegger's request, portrayed the aged philosopher at work, endeavouring to introduce his fellow-thinkers into the essential questions, and thus to bring them onto his path of thought: 'I believe I am on the path, though I don't know whether I will complete it.' Heidegger elucidated what provoked him to his work when in May 1976, a few days before his death, he sent the *Spiegel* editor Georg Wolff his manuscript 'Modern natural science and modern technology' ('Neuzeitliche Naturwissenschaft und moderne Technik') with the dedication: 'A question as of yet unthought' (*Eine noch nicht bedachte Frage*).<sup>10</sup> The confrontation with the 'unbridled beast' (as Heidegger put it in his last Marburg lecture) had at least since the crisis Winter of 1929–30 pushed Heidegger in a direction which also made possible the temporary alliance with the National Socialist Revolution. That Nietzscheanism, which at once both joined and juxtaposed life and spirit (*Geist*) to each other, seemed to conceptualize the constellation of the time: a new transfigured figure (*Gestalt*) for the pain of becoming (*das Werden*) was to be wrested out of the antagonism of the Dionysian and the Apollonian. However, with the young Nietzsche's thoughts on art,

Heidegger sought not only an historical greatness in a world reconfigured by myths; he also accepted how the later Nietzsche juxtaposed Dionysus against the world-negating Christian eschatology, yet nevertheless proclaimed the death of traditional God. Ernst Jünger at that time gave this Nietzscheanism the final edge: in the total mobilization of all energies was to be won that contact with the 'mythical' which also through death in the *matériel* battle was to enable the experiencing of the identification with a meaning-giving and surviving figure (*Gestalt*): the soldier and the worker.<sup>11</sup> When Heidegger broke off his direct political engagement, he saw the constellation of the times more validly addressed in Hölderlin's discourse of the truth, which eventuates (*sich ereignet*) despite the 'long' time. The Germans, this restless and threatened people (*Volk*) in the endangered midst of Europe, appeared called upon to find a new future from its relationship to the Greeks. Yet even before National Socialism openly trod the path of struggle for world domination, Heidegger, in the lecture course *Einführung in die Metaphysik* from Summer 1935,<sup>12</sup> posited the retrograde tie (*Rückbindung*) of the still only mechanical mobilization and organization to the question of race alongside the retrograde tie of Bolshevism to the notion of 'class', although also in tandem with the collusion of groups in Western liberalism. Heidegger labelled all of these externalized formations of a common life as being completely oblivious to the actual task at hand. The *Spiegel* interview of 1966 repeats this view of things: National Socialism, as it were, had 'gone in the direction', of searching for a relationship to the essence of technology; 'these people, however, were far too unreflective in thinking to attain a truly explicit relationship to that which today happens and which is underway for the last three centuries'.

In a famous annotation to the lecture course from Summer 1935 Heidegger contrasted the actual National Socialism with its 'inner truth and greatness', namely the attempted confrontation with modern technology; the *Spiegel* interview still claimed an 'inner truth' for the confrontation of poetry and thought (*Dichten und Denken*) with the destiny (*Geschick*) which determines our time. The universal scientific-technical grasp (*Zugriff*) of what is (including the human being), should be shown its limits; in the Being of beings the withdrawal (*Entzug*) should be found, which withdraws the assigned (*das Zugewiesene*) from disposal (*das Verfügung*) and thereby allows to flash up that which grants meaning and binds, which is named the holy and the divine. Metaphysics, which found its culmination in a philosophical theology,<sup>13</sup> is dismissed as an illusion. Thus Heidegger maintains that philosophy and in general 'all the merely human musings and endeavours' on their own cannot bring about a direct transformation of the present state of the world.

Only a god can yet save us. The single possibility remaining for us is

in thinking and in poetry to prepare a readiness for the appearance of god or for the absence of god in the downfall; that we go down in the face of the absent god.

Heidegger says only 'a' god, but that means: a 'god' such as showed itself high over the city of Athens in the meaning-bestowing form of Athena of the Parthenon and who orientated the entire life of the *polis*. Thus art as a counterforce to the technological disposal (*Verfügung*) comes into play, an art which still or once again possesses a cultic significance for life. The question remains of whether we are vouchsafed such an art, which allows the saving power to appear or which wakens a preparedness for it. Does Heidegger in the cited sentence mean that the 'appearance of god' (*Erscheinung des Gottes*) could save, but the 'absence of god' (*Abwesenheit des Gottes*) is ensnared in a downfall, which after the self-destruction of Europe as the former centre of the world also distorts the essence of man itself there? A few sections later Heidegger speaks of the 'preparation for the readiness of one's self-exposure for the arrival or the absence of god' (*Vorbereitung der Bereitschaft des Sich-Offen-Haltens für die Ankunft oder das Ausbleiben des Gottes*): 'Also the experience of this absence is not nothing, rather a liberation of man from that which in *Being and Time* I called the deterioration to being [*das Seiende*]' . In any case this indicates that one cannot reckon history according to happy or unhappy peoples or periods. He who flounders can also learn what he should have lived by, and towards which task his life was actually oriented. In its very downfall Europe can teach the world something! The Greeks knew that the downfall of a tragic figure is no mere loss: in her downfall Antigone showed a new experience of the divine, through which another time could be born (at least in Hölderlin's translation and reinterpretation of this tragedy, which was definitive for Heidegger).<sup>14</sup>

Half a year after the *Spiegel* interview, on 4 April 1967, Heidegger took his leave from public activity before the Academy of Sciences and Arts. His speech 'The provenance of art and the determination of thinking' ('Die Herkunft der Kunst und die Bestimmung des Denkens')<sup>15</sup> reminds the age of the sciences and technology that the Greeks founded as the beginning for the Western European sciences and arts. The inception (*Anfang*) of a destiny (*Geschick*) however is the greatest power, which prevails before all belated followers and also awaits us as the future. Athena, 'the erstwhile protectress of the city and the country', is to accompany the lecture. The first step of the speech asks: what does the goddess say of the provenance of art? Athena is she who advises in manifold ways (in Homer, in the metope of the temple to Zeus in Olympia). For that reason she could assist those who weren't yet technicians but also not mere craftsmen (*Handwerker*), that is, the artists.

Besides the *techne* the *technites* needed a knowledge (*Wissen*) which looks ahead toward the standard-rendering invisible power (*das maßgebende Unsichtbare*). Athena can bestow counsel because she has the shining bright eye that also penetrates the night and renders the invisible visible. She who gives counsel and illuminates at once is also the meditating one (*die Sinnende*). She gazes at the border stone (as in the holy relief in the Acropolis museum). Only from the border does that, which is, find its essence: the mountain and the island, the glistening olive tree as the goddess's gift to her country. The *techne* belongs to the rising (*das Aufgehen*) and the abiding (*das Verweilen*), that is, to the *physis*. In order for *physis* and *techne* to come together, an element is needed, which even archaic Greece only cautiously touched on: the lightning of Zeus, which directs everything. According to Aeschylus, Athena guarded the key to the house in which this lightning lies locked and sealed.<sup>16</sup> Thus could art earn its provenance from the rule of this goddess.

In a second step of the speech Heidegger needs to prove that the gods have fled: 'Delphi slumbers' (*Delphi schummert*). Art is no longer work (*Werk*) in the sense of Heidegger's artwork essay.<sup>17</sup> Art no longer provides through its works the orientation to 'a world of the folkish and the national' (*eine Welt des Volkhaften und Nationalen*); rather art now belongs with the sciences and technologies in a 'world civilization'. In the world of this civilization science itself, to speak with Nietzsche, has been conquered by method, namely by the secured disposal (*Verfügung*) of all that is. Method unfolds as cybernetics. As futurology, cybernetics also draws into the programmable the single possibility of interference, the apparently free human action. The presupposition of these cybernetic-futurological graspings is the society which, relying exclusively on itself and its power of disposal (*Verfügungsmacht*), posits itself as an industrial society above its institutions as the constructed spheres of the lived world. In a third step Heidegger asks from where in this world a thinking might come which can reflect upon the provenance of art. Cybernetics encloses the human being and his relations to the world in the most extensive feedback control system of inter-relation between human and world; the futurology brings that captivity into the programmable, and the industrial society exists only 'on the basis of its incarceration within its own construct' (*auf dem Grunde der Eingeschlossenheit in ihr eigenes Gemächte*). Does modern art as well fall prey to the self-regulating artistic process? In that case, the claim, from which it lives, comes from the scientific-technological world; art too becomes an autonomous (perhaps compensatory) feedback of information in the feedback control system of industrial society. Heidegger searches for another path. Indeed he must ask whether the hope, as it is posited by Ernst Bloch as a principle,<sup>18</sup> is 'not the unconditional selfishness of human subjectivity'. But even Heidegger does not want to renounce world civilization, rather he wishes to take a

step back from it; and from the distance gained he wants to perceive it as a destiny (*Geschick*), without being pulled back into its tendency towards its self-enclosedness (*Sichverschließen*). For that reason he recalls the inceptive (*das Anfängliche*), that from which art could become art, yet also that from which thinking (*das Denken*) is claimed, if it accepts that which was foretold, yet which remained unthought. The Greek light, which sets everything within its borders, indicates a concealment (*Verborgenheit*), which conceals, in that it reveals (*entbirgt*) at the borders. The temporal period of this unconcealment is a clearing (*Lichtung*); yet this clearing is not only light (*Licht*) (as the metaphysics of light and reason intended), but also at the same time darkness; one can also stride through darkness. The word *aletheia* points in this direction, yet this indication in the age of nuclear physics, genetic technology and astronautics must remain something slight and inconspicuous. Heidegger however can end his discourse with a verse of Pindar: the word determines life further in time than the deeds, if language brings it up out of the depths of the meditating heart.<sup>19</sup>

## II Technology and politics

Heidegger's thought struck a chord, because it was not learned discussion, specialized analysis or hasty actualization, but because with concentrated seriousness it led to first and last questions, and thus from the point of view of the one and only question of Being problematized the possibility of philosophy itself. Under a certain necessity Heidegger was led to return to the beginnings of philosophy in the tragic age of the Greeks; he saw this beginning of thinking in close proximity to poetry (*Dichtung*), especially tragedy. One notices in Heidegger's Athens speech that it addresses the Greeks as the founders of our science and arts, but then does not speak of the philosophy and sciences of the Greeks, rather it elucidates the definition of thinking from the provenance (*Herkunft*) of art. Heidegger proceeded in this way, because he increasingly tended to the conviction that the beginning of thought was unable to incorporate its inceptiveness (*Anfänglichkeit*) into itself and therefore was unable to comprehend itself from out of the event (*Ereignis*) of truth. Thus philosophy was able to become the metaphysical grasp of being (*das Seiende*); it was of itself and with the sciences defined as 'technical' (*technisch*). Plato's doctrine of ideas is seen in this way in the light of Nietzsche's reflections on the history of nihilism, even though Nietzsche himself thereby becomes more and more hopelessly entangled in the metaphysical viewpoint. Thereby thinking (*das Denken*) itself cannot wish to remain 'Greek', but rather must lead its inception, which forgot its inceptiveness, to another inception. One of the last achievements of



bourgeois culture, tourism by ship, made it possible for Heidegger at an advanced age to visit the sites of the erstwhile Greek life, for example, on the first trip in April 1962, to walk through the lion's alley (*Löwenalle*) in Delos. Yet his very visits to Greece led Heidegger to revise his endeavours to think the beginning of thought: in the last of his four *Seminare* (1973 in Zähringen)<sup>20</sup> Heidegger made it known that he had again changed his interpretation of Parmenides. In Parmenides too there was no trace of the concealing (*Verbergung*) in the unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*) and thus no trace of the essence of *aletheia*! That was a revocation of the approach with which Heidegger in his 1932 lecture course on the beginning of Western philosophy had articulated a new passage in this path of thought; without any support from the earliest obliterated traces Heidegger had to develop his theme, the clearing for the self-concealing (*Lichtung für das Sichverbergen*). Was not thereby the uni-linear drama of the history of Being also given up, which saw this history of thought yet again 'substantially', that is, solely from the vantage point of the single posited and failed task (of thinking)? For Heidegger's thesis, that the modern natural sciences are already technical in their very approach, one can also adduce parallel reflections in Max Scheler and the neo-Marxists. The development of the nuclear sciences and technologies especially is a convincing example that the scientists are, to a large extent, powerless and helpless, caught in the net of political and economical forces. One can find an early intimation of the victory of method over science in the conclusion of Hegel's *Logic*, where method is absolutized into the development of one logical relationship.<sup>21</sup> The young Marx related the self-sufficient industrial society to a utopian goal, when in his Paris manuscripts for the public ownership of production and a humanized nature he proclaimed even the ontological proof of God.<sup>22</sup> None the less the question arises of whether the first thesis of the victory of method over science is too undifferentiated and thereby finally false. When Heidegger locates the technical approach in modern natural sciences in its mathematicalization, then it must be noted that the Greeks had already made the move to pure mathematics and that Hellenistic astronomy created a mathematical natural science that is not a technical grasp. In point of fact the modern scientific approach is characterized by the analytical experiment which, for instance in the case of motion, abstracts the effective forces of resistance (such as friction) and thus through a methodological abstraction arrives at 'pure' phenomena and their laws. The methodology relativizes scientific labour towards the conceptualization of delimited and abstracted characteristics of reality; for this reason as well Heisenberg's later endeavours will be misunderstood, if they are characterized in a vulgar fashion as a struggle for a totalized 'universal formula'. In his lecture 'The question concerning technology',<sup>23</sup> Heidegger imputes to Heisenberg the thesis that in a

physics which takes account of the physicist and his experimental structure, man only encounters himself. Heisenberg however had to contradict this radicalization: physics, in its methodological abstraction and in the critical knowledge of its own boundaries, only interprets certain aspects of our being-in-the-world; the Platonic doctrine of ideas and the correctly understood mathematicalization have abiding validity for this comprehension of reality and exist on good terms with the interpretation of reality by artistic productions.

*Being and Time* in its confrontation with the Greeks sought to elaborate philosophically a 'science of Being', and thus to make possible a logical and existential differentiation between sciences such as physics, history and theology. Later Heidegger conceived of scientific labour as a single unified process which, as a grasping of the world in itself, is technical and thus inextricably linked with technology. Yet when the essay 'Die Frage nach der Technik' attempts to discuss and situate technology in its 'essence', then technology is interpreted not anthropologically or instrumentally, but ontologically. Technology (*die Technik*) is a disclosure (*Erschließung*) of being (*das Seiende*) according to its Being and therefore indicates the constellation of the truth of Being itself. The modern science of atomic energy would be impossible without nuclear technology; it is bound up with the dangers of military and industrial uses of this technology, yet it also discloses unfamiliar underlying dimensions of reality itself. However, such an articulated knowledge remains here limited to certain aspects of our being-in-the-world, and only this methodological abstraction leads to the disclosure of reality its scientific character. The uncanniness of the newly disclosed dimension of reality reminds man drastically of his powerlessness and finitude; the struggle against the dangers made possible by this new technology indicates that this human finitude has its practical dimension.

When Heidegger speaks of cybernetics, then he is indirectly recalling that the mathematical physics cannot sustain unchallenged the role of a paradigmatic science, as it was earlier believed. If biology has received a new significance, then genetic technology indeed demonstrates the advance of mechanistic ways of thinking; yet along with these tendencies in microbiology can be found the holistic characteristics of macrobiology, which on the other hand speaks of the uniqueness and the unavailability (*Unverfügbarkeit*) of life and its 'niches'. Astronautics as well reminds man of the limits of his expansion into space and of the openness and inexplicability of his situation (if there were a conversation, indeed an encounter with other intelligent beings in the universe, then the situation of humanity would drastically change). In the *Spiegel* interview Heidegger finds terrifying the televised view of the earth from the moon, and sees it as an indication of the deracination of man; but doesn't this image also show how improbable and how full of beauty, though also full of

dangers is this niche of life on this small blue planet? Nowhere is the concrete technology the unfolding of a single will to power which, eternally recurring, wills itself and thereby demands from humanity its self-sufficient 'industrial society'. This totalizing discourse of society perhaps conceptualizes a tendency in contemporary humanity; but a critical analysis of society must proceed with greater differentiation and can then relinquish such discourse to the vulgar beliefs, which have nothing more to do with science.

Nietzsche saw in the philosophers of the tragic age of the Greeks the testimony that philosophy could also exist among a 'healthy' people. Philosophy in this sense however presupposes the unitary style of a culture. Such a unitary style Heidegger finds only in the negative characteristics of a world civilization. Politics becomes meaningful only when it makes possible through its guaranteeing of delimited life-spheres a disruption of this disastrous universal network. Before the question therefore, of how the present world is apportioned into various dominions, is the question, for instance, of how the opposition of technology and art is vouchsafed a necessary scope of action. The *Spiegel* interview does not want to decide whether one day in China and Russia 'ancient traditions' (*uralte Überlieferungen*) will not contribute to 'making it possible for man to have a free relationship to the technical world'; it is significant that the hopes for the USA are more subdued. Heidegger, who in 1937 in the last public gesture of communication in a newspaper article had called for 'paths towards discussion' (*Wege zur Aussprache*)<sup>24</sup> with France, worked further toward a German-French encounter after the self-destruction of Europe; admittedly Heidegger, who in *Being and Time* still constructed the central concepts of the 'temporal interpretation' with words derived from Latin, wanted to oblige Romance language philosophy to a thinking in the original Greek and its echoed articulation in German. The resistance to the 'unbridled beast' of technology can be formulated with words of Heidegger's friend, the French poet René Char, the 'poet and resistance fighter', who let Hölderlin echo in the pathos of his poems and who united his native Provence with the Mediterranean realm and with Greece:

In Provence rocket bases are now being built, and the country is being devastated in an inconceivable fashion. The poet, who certainly is not to be suspected of sentimentality or a glorification of the idyllic, told me, the deracination of man, which there is taking place, is the end, if poetry and thought do not once again come to non-violent power.

The question remains, whether this 'contra' (*Gegen*) can be translated into a reasonable political *praxis*. In the *Spiegel* interview Heidegger maintains: 'It is a decisive question for me today how a – and which –

political system can be related to the technological age. I have no answer to this question.' The next clause is indeed fearful: 'I am not convinced that it is democracy.' Heidegger, who at least supported his students in their endeavours to create a new relationship between philosophy and politics, had for himself as well not completely ruled out political activity. Thus, despite the abstinence he imposed upon himself in the political realm after his aberration (*Verirrung*) in 1933, Heidegger joined a people's referendum in late 1975, which demanded a moratorium on nuclear reactor construction.

The decisive question remains of whether the totalitarianism of National Socialism should be seen as a prelude to a perhaps more terrifying future and whether it should be ascribed to a trivialization (that is, determined by the supremacy of instrumental reason, as the Frankfurt School exegesis, similarly to Heidegger, would have it). Is the 'inner truth', through which poetry and thought seek to answer a destiny (in a rupture or in the subversive endeavour to locate inconspicuous beginnings), really only the antithesis to totalitarianisms or rather often a tendency of them? The French Revolution and, more than a hundred years later, the October Revolution wanted to help humanity to achieve a better life; the conviction that history must lead to something absolutely new soon led to the view that in such an exceptional situation every form of terror is permitted, even necessary. This tendency may also have had its role to play in the National Socialist Revolution; a philosophizing, which knew itself committed to the hour and the historical upheaval, could join with the very first uncertain departure. In the *Spiegel* interview Heidegger claims that his lecture course of 1951–2 *Was heißt Denken?* strives for the inner truth of poetry and thought (*Dichten und Denken*), and yet for that reason is so little appreciated. Yet in this lecture course does not the inner truth turn suddenly and without mediation into a perverted triviality, when with Nietzsche and with a glance at the example of old Russia those institutions are recommended which could still be 'anti-liberal' 'to the point of malice'? Hölderlin's short ode is quoted, in which Socrates favours Alcibiades, that is, which portrays the union of wisdom with youthful and fervent beauty.<sup>25</sup> Hölderlin's point of departure is the *Symposium*, but he then conceives of beauty as a tragic process. But Thucydides can instruct us how the youth of Athens brought their city to ruin through their military adventure in Sicily, and how Alcibiades himself could offer his political art first to the Athenian, then to the Spartan and Persian, then finally to the Athenian faction again. Even Hölderlin's political dreams came to an end in that he would have been brought to trial and charged with high treason by Sinclair, had the poet's mental collapse not protected him. The appeal to Hölderlin's verse would be mere palliation, if one overlooks this crass reality and doesn't take it as an admonition for the path through the twentieth century.

### III Art and the saving power

The Greek light (*Licht*), as Heidegger says in his Athens speech, places the simple within its borders: the island, the mountain, the olive tree. Can this light also lead us to the clearing (*die Lichtung*), as Heidegger conceives of it from its meaning as a demarcated woodland clearing? Heidegger relates the Greek light to the lightning of Zeus which directs everything. In the Heraclitus seminar which Heidegger held with Eugen Fink<sup>26</sup> he remembers one afternoon of his sojourn on the island of Aegina: 'Suddenly I heard [sic] a single stroke of lightning. My thought was: Zeus.' The key to the lightning, which directs the emergence of the Greek world, is in the safe keeping of Athena; yet if anything, art and not thinking remained close to this mystery (*Geheimnis*). Thus the beginning, which the Greeks made for history, is to be related to the actually posited task only through another beginning of thinking. The question arises where at all in Greek history one is to establish this beginning. A goddess such as Pallas Athena who comes to us from temple reliefs and archaic poetry exhibits murky beginnings, no doubt pre-Socratic: the tutelary spirit of cities, the aid in battle only gradually took on its later form, after the Indo-Europeans came to the Aegean Sea four thousand years ago. That Athena sprang fully armed from the head of Zeus, or that she safeguards the secret of his lightning, these are beliefs that were attributed to the goddess only much later. She first received her name from the Boetian and later Attic Athens and thus demonstrates how the gods of myths and epics were only retroactively associated with definite locales and regions. Is there at all anything simple and inceptive (*ein Einfaches und Anfängliches*) in this history, which one can hold onto and that can still give us an orientation?

On the one hand the Mediterranean peninsulas and islands must have seemed to the various groups of migrating Greeks like the land of Phaeacians, who hosted and fêted Odysseus; on the other hand they must have been overpowering with blazing sun and storm, and ever-surfing sea and earthquakes, and the elemental forces of nature. The emigrant newcomers brought with them their supreme sky-god, who also safeguards the lightning; this god had to join with the earth and mother divinities already present there. In these conjunctions the simple and the inconspicuous could have played its role. For instance one of the oldest shrines, the Temple of Hera at Samos, lay not only in the fertile plain; the divinity for it was also found in the lygeum (or esparto) bush, which even today protects fertility (without such hormonal assistance many children would not be born). Perhaps Zeus came to this goddess as a cuckoo, which might well mean: with the call of spring. In any case the Samian Hera is not simply the Hera of Argos; the Artemis of Ephesos is not (as Heidegger assumes in his Heraclitus lectures<sup>27</sup>) the Artemis of

Delos and sister of Apollo. These figures of Greek divinity were in constant transformation; they existed only in a diversity, which in turn entailed confrontations: even Athena first had to wrest the Attic land from Poseidon, the sea-god and earth-shaker. The Greeks remained exposed to this diverse and conflictual multitude of divine powers in their small cities, which for their part were likewise in continual struggles with each other and thus equally exposed to downfall and arduous rebuilding. When the Age of Goethe sought a new art and literature for its new life-experiences, it wanted to draw its orientation from Greece; can we today assume this orientation, after Nietzsche has lent it a tragic intensity?

When Nietzsche spoke of the Dionysian and the Apollonian, he assumed that Schopenhauer had interpreted the view of Greece and aesthetics in general through the overturning of the metaphysical tradition: it is music which discloses the *an sich*, the ideal forms are finally only an illusion, which makes bearable the pain of becoming. Yet can epic and sculpture really be ascribed simply to the Apollonian, and can tragedy then be interpreted as the mediation of these elements with Dionysian music? Only heroic battle and death counted for Homer's heroes; what happened *in* death was irrelevant. Yet later the graves of heroes and the remembrance of the founding figures were again cultivated and the gods again united with the country; thus could all those tendencies appear anew, including the Dionysian. Nevertheless the Dionysian tragedy began – in the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus – with the invocation of Zeus. When Heidegger in the Winter of 1929–30 enlisted Nietzsche's antagonism to the interpretation of the argument about 'life and spirit' (*Leben und Geist*), he also took up Nietzsche's late slogan 'Dionysus contra the Crucified'. Nietzsche's friend Overbeck had impressed him with the 'world-denying' element of Christian eschatology; therefore with Hölderlin Heidegger inquired after the gods of the earth and the homeland (*die Heimat*) and after the demi-god, who like the Rhine makes an entire land fertile and habitable.

When the catastrophe which had occurred long ago finally became manifest in the Second World War, the saving power remained only as the slowness of inconspicuous beginnings; finally Hölderlin was heard from the echo which he had found in Trakl. If Trakl has him, who is called into the downfall (*Untergang*), encounter the spiritual blueness of the sacred (*die geistliche Bläue des Heiligen*),<sup>28</sup> then Cézanne 'realizes' in the autonomous medium of art as nature does, in that he allows inconspicuous things to emerge out of the blue shadows. The artist, who confined himself to Provence, found his theme not in the disquiet of Paris nor in the contrast between the poverty in the coal-mining region and the solitude of Bretagne, but rather in the peaceful Montagne St Victoire. When Heidegger spoke of Provence as the bridge to Greece,

then one wonders to what extent he saw Greece and the inceptiveness of its hills, islands and olive trees with Cézanne's eyes. One should not search out a place in the many centuries for that which is inceptive (*das Anfängliche*) in Greek history, in which for example Athena first becomes the figure we encounter in the temple pediments and the literary texts. The inceptiveness lies rather in that modest area, in which *mythos* and *logos*, *Dichten* and *Denken* separate from each other, yet according to Heidegger always remain in the vicinity of a common striving for a native (*heimatlich*) dwelling on this earth. However, perhaps thought in the tragic age of the Greeks was also more various than Heidegger wants to perceive it, yet always marked by a colonial push for world conquest, which must be separated from the traditional embeddedness in *mythos*. Thus Plato's doctrine of ideas in a genuine way might continue 'Greek' motifs, which for us today have a practical relevance. Philosophizing incidentally is related not only to poetry (*Dichtung*) and to a cultic form of art; it has its beginnings also in its diverging from other life-spheres. Therefore there can be no single beginning of philosophy at all. When work for everyone grows scarce and leisure time becomes problematical in an industrial society, then art for its part cannot be so intertwined with the active life, as once may have been the case in the Greek dawn.

Heidegger tried to remove Athens from its contiguity with Jerusalem, Carthage and Rome; thus he had to overlook how Hölderlin in the final phase of his creativity relativized the relation of German to Greek and the hope for an immediate return of the divine. In 1939–40 Heidegger put aside the problematic of the hymn 'Wenn am Feiertag' with Norbert von Hellingrath by deleting the fragmentary conclusion of the poem; in 1959 he simply omitted the thematically more complete early version of the late draft for the hymn 'Griechenland'. Yet that version shows that by then for Hölderlin the *mythos* of the Greeks had become only one of the guises of God and that the poet's concern was rather the transition over the Alps, indeed the Hesperian festivals such as the wedding of the heir to the Württemberg duchy in London. Thus the verses of 'Patmos' that speak of the danger, in which the saving power also grows, are reversed by Heidegger: the verses no longer warn against seeking a rupture and breakthrough to the divine at any cost, rather they refer to the nihilism in which every trace of the divine is gone. According to the Patmos hymn, however, the danger lies in the fact that the peaks of time (*Gipfel der Zeit*) are distressingly near. These peaks, which remain separate from each other, are those above which the eagle flies in the hymn 'Germanien': the mountains of Asia, where patriarchs and prophets encountered their god, the sacred mountains of Greece and Italy, the Alps, which led to Northern Europe and its history. Only the faithfulness, which keeps the one and the other and which mediates all that is bestowed, furthers the growth of the saving power. For that reason

Hölderlin flies with the Genius not only to Taurus in Asia, but also returns to the Aegean: above the shadowless straits of the sea, which are familiar to the sailor, he finds among the beloved Greek islands near Samos and Delos also Patmos, the island monastery. There Saint John, in a cave on the precipice of a mountain, underwent and recounted that revelation, which teaches endurance in dark times.

With Hölderlin's elegy 'Brot und Wein' Heidegger charged poets with the task of bringing back to mortals the trace of the absent gods. But he never considered how Hölderlin spoke of the trace in the hymn 'Der Einzige': in the desert as the place of temptation toward hubris Christ preserves 'the trace of a word' (*die Spur eines Wortes*), namely that of law, which is already written but once again is becoming a mere trace. The Hesperian especially, who perforce stands in an open history, should not reject the helpful trace. However, in 1942–3, when Heidegger in his lecture course *Parmenides*<sup>29</sup> tried to dissolve the opposition of *mythos* and *logos* and to regain a tragic experience of god, he was only concerned with Sophocles and the Greeks; the poet who placed Shakespeare next to Sophocles is depicted thus: 'Goethe is a disaster' (*Goethe ist ein Verhängnis*). According to Heidegger humanism mixed together that which is incomparable and made Greek antiquity 'completely' inaccessible. Certainly one needn't think immediately of Shakespeare's persiflage of the Greeks in *Troilus and Cressida*; but Shakespeare and Goethe belong to us. And in fact from the 1950s onward one sees Heidegger again and again presenting the path to that which is simple with a citation from Goethe, yet the gesture of rejection and the retreat to a proper and authentic (*ein Eigenes und Eigentliches*) remained. Thus can Heidegger, who none the less introduced 'deconstruction' (*die 'Destrucktion'*) into phenomenological philosophy, speak of contemporary literature in the *Spiegel* interview only as 'largely destructive'. When Heidegger was in Bremen once he made a rare visit to the theatre and there saw Lorca's *Dona Rosita*, in which the old professor Don Martin is mocked cruelly by his students and only the old housekeeper finds his question, 'What is an idea?' still meaningful. At this point Heidegger whispered to his companion, 'Yes, that's me'. Thereby he seemed to interpret himself – 'with an expression of composed sadness', as Lorca's stage directions put it. Yet only with difficulty could the critic of humanism have adopted the humanity of Molière, who has the extravagant Sganarelle in *L'escole des maris* say that it is 'better to belong to the multitude of fools than to be wise and stand alone against all the rest'. It is inconceivable that Heidegger could have recognized the grotesquerie of those statements from his *Parmenides* lecture course, which in the sombre winter of 1942–3 after the establishment of the 'Final Solution' and in the face of Stalin-grad yet portrayed the Germans as 'invincible', if only they would repeat



the Greek inception (*Anfang*) and remain 'the nation of poets and thinkers' (*Volk der Dichter und Denker*).

In his 'Rektoratsrede'<sup>30</sup> of 1933 Heidegger repeated the old legend of the Greeks, that Prometheus was the first philosopher; with reference to the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus Heidegger claimed that all knowing (*Wissen*) remained exposed to the predominance of fate (*Schicksal*). In the meantime man in another Promethean feat had acquired atomic fire, but also the atomic constituents of life itself, which is now threatened in its entirety, world-wide. Because of this humanity is now forced into a new solidarity and responsibility, and thus Heidegger's discourse on 'the planetary nature' (*das Planetarische*) of world civilization can be taken not only negatively as a reference to deracination. Out of the very dangers now arisen must man not bring his new intellectual and practical abilities to bear on prospects which Heidegger himself in 1927–8 with Max Scheler in a fully positive way had called 'metaphysical' or 'meta-ontological'? In this dimension philosophizing might enter into a new proximity to art; this proximity signifies however neither an overtaking of the mythical through *logos* nor the presupposition of an absolute inceptiveness (*Anfängliche*) in art. Hegel's discourse on 'the end of art' is qualifiably correct, in so far as art and poetry (*Dichtung*) constitute only one particular human pursuit alongside others (for instance the scientific-technical). Sometimes it seems as if in his final years Heidegger in his reflections on his companion in misfortune, Cézanne, had forgotten Paul Klee, from the perspective of whose theoretical writings Heidegger had wanted in 1959 to write a 'pendant' to his artwork essay.<sup>31</sup> With all the inclination to the lyrical, the phantastic and also the farcical, Klee developed an art which consciously constructs and composes its figures out of the simplest elements. Thus in his art Klee incorporates the technological (*das Technische*), so as finally to induce from it the acceptance of finitude and fatefulness (for example the acceptance of one's own death in the last picture *Tod und Feuer* (*Death and Fire*), which Heidegger included with Trakl's poems and Heisenberg's formulae in his foreword to *Being and Time*<sup>32</sup>). The saving power can grow only when humanity as a whole assumes responsibility for an always precarious and always finite and limited life on this concrete planet. The future name of the divine must derive its meaning from this adoption of a fateful finitude. The simple and the initial can only be found from within the overarching situation. For that reason Paul Celan in a poem, which at first was to be a poem of Hiroshima, also related the simpleness of the cherry blossom to that 'here', which remains determined by Hiroshima: 'Here – where the cherry blossom wants to be darker than there'.<sup>33</sup>

## Notes

1 Translator's Note (hereafter T.N.): *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1963); *Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking*, tr. Daniel Magurshak and Sigmund Barber (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1987).

2 Cf. the Afterword to the second edition of *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1983), p. 355. The latter account in *Heidegger und die hermeneutische Philosophie* (Freiburg/München: Verlag Karl Alber, 1983) continues the thought of the first book with the attempt to reincorporate Heidegger's themes into a hermeneutical philosophy.

3 T.N.: in *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), pp. 61–80; 'The end of philosophy and the task of thinking', in *Basic Writings*, ed. D. F. Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 373–92.

4 T.N.: cf. Heidegger's text 'Adalbert Stifter's "Eisgeschichte"' (1964), in *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens 1910–1976*, GA 13 (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1983), pp. 185–98.

5 T.N.: M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 2 vols (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961); M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 4 vols, ed. D. F. Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1979–87).

6 'Der Weg zur Sprache', in Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), pp. 157–216; 'The way to language' in *On the Way to Language*, tr. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 111–38.

7 T.N.: Title of one of the lectures from *Nietzsche II*. Translated as 'Nihilism as determined by the history of being' in *Nietzsche*, vol. IV, ed. D. F. Krell.

8 T.N.: *Einblick in das was ist*. Bremer Vorträge (1949). 'Das Ding'; 'Das Ge-stell'; 'Die Gefahr'; 'Die Kehre'.

9 'Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten', in *Der Spiegel*, Hamburg, 31 May 1976, pp. 193–219. English trs, 'Only a god can save us now', tr. D. Schendler, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, 6 (1977), pp. 5–27; '“Only a god can save us”: *Der Spiegel's* interview with Martin Heidegger', tr. M. P. Alter and J. D. Caputo, *Philosophy Today*, 20 (1976), pp. 267–84.

10 *Der Spiegel*, 31 May 1976, pp. 193ff.; 30 August 1976, p. 3. On the question, to what extent a practical or political philosophy might adjoin Heidegger's reflections on the significance of technology, see the controversy between A. Schwan and myself: cf. the Afterword to the second edition of Otto Pöggeler, *Philosophie und Politik bei Heidegger* (Freiburg/München, 1974), pp. 155ff. Cf. also Otto Pöggeler, 'Heideggers politisches Selbstverständnis' in Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert and Otto Pöggeler (eds), *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1987).

11 T.N.: Pöggeler is referring to two texts by Ernst Jünger; *Der Arbeiter* (1932) and *Totale Mobilmachung* (1934). Cf. Heidegger's response to Jünger in 'Zur Seinsfrage', in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1967), pp. 379–420; *The Question of Being*, tr. with Introduction by William Kluback and Jean T. Wilde (New York: Twayne, 1958). On Heidegger and Jünger see Michael E. Zimmerman, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics and Art* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1990).

12 T.N.: *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1976); *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, tr. R. Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955).

13 T.N.: On this point cf. for example 'Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik' in *Identität und Differenz* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1957), pp. 31–68; *Identity and Difference*, tr. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

14 T.N.: On Heidegger and Antigone cf.: George Steiner, *Antigones* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 131–5, 174–7.

15 In *Distanz und Nähe. Reflexionen und Analysen zur Kunst der Gegenwart* (Festschrift für W. Biemel), ed. Petra Jaeger und Rudolf Lütke (Würzburg, 1983). T.N.: to my knowledge no English translation of this text exists.

16 T.N.: cf. Aeschylus, *Eumenides* ll. 824–6.

17 T.N.: ‘Der Ursprung des Kunstwerks’, in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1950), pp. 1–72; ‘The origin of the work of art’, in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 143–88.

18 T.N.: Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, now in Bloch’s *Werkausgabe* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985); *The Principle of Hope*, tr. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986).

19 T.N.: Heidegger at the conclusion of the Athens speech cites Pindar’s Fourth Nemean Ode, ll. 6–8:

ῥῆμα ὃ ἐργμάτων χρονιώτερον βιοτεύει,  
ὅτι κε σὺν Χαρίτων τύχη  
γλώσσα φρένος ἐξέλοι βαθείας.

(‘Longer than deeds liveth the word, whatsoever it be that the tongue, by the favour of the Graces, draweth forth from the depth of the mind’. Sir John Sandys, *The Odes of Pindar*, Loeb Classics (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 347.)

Heidegger translates the passage as:

Das Wort aber weiter hinaus in die Zeit als die Taten bestimmt es das Leben,  
wenn nur mit der Charitinnen Gunst  
die Sprache es herausholt aus der Tiefe des sinnenden Herzens.

20 T.N.: *Wer Seminare*, GA 15, ed. Curd Ochswadt (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1986).

21 T.N.: cf. the final chapter of Hegel’s *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ‘The absolute idea’:

More exactly, the absolute Idea itself has for its content merely this, that the form determination is its own completed totality, the pure Notion. Now the determinateness of the Idea and the entire course followed by this determinateness has constituted the subject matter of the science of logic, from which course the absolute Idea itself has issued into *an existence of its own*; but the nature of this its existence has shown itself to be this, that determinateness does not have the shape of a *content*, but exists wholly as *form*, and that accordingly the Idea is the absolutely *universal Idea*. Therefore what remains to be considered here is not a content as such, but the universal aspect of its form – that is, the *method*.

*Hegel’s Science of Logic*, tr. A. V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1969), p. 825.

22 T.N.: cf. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844).

23 T.N.: ‘Die Frage nach der Technik’, in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1954), pp. 9–40; ‘The question concerning technology’, in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, tr. with introduction by William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 3–35.

24 T.N.: 'Wege zur Ausprache', in *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens 1910-1976*, pp. 15-22.

25 T.N.: *Was heißt Denken?* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1954), p. 9; *What is Called Thinking?*, tr. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 20. The poem there reads:

*Socrates and Alcibiades*

'Why, holy Socrates, must you always adore  
This young man? Is there nothing greater than he?  
Why do you look on him  
Lovingly, as on a god?'

'Who has most deeply thought, loves what is most alive,  
Who has looked at the world, understands youth at its height,  
And wise men in the end  
Often incline to beauty.'

26 T.N.: *Heraklit* (Seminar with Eugen Fink) (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1970); *Heraclitus Seminar 1966/67*, tr. C. H. Seibert (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1979).

27 T.N.: *Heraklit*, GA 55, ed. Manfred S. Frings (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1987).

28 T.N.: Reference to Heidegger's reading of selected poems of Georg Trakl in 'Die Sprache im Gedicht,' in *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), pp. 35-82; 'Language in the poem: a discussion of George Trakl's poetic work', in *On the Way to Language*, tr. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 159-98.

29 T.N.: *Parmenides*, GA 54, ed. Manfred S. Frings (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1982).

30 *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität. Rede, gehalten bei der feierlichen Übernahme des Rektorats der Universität Freiburg i. Br. am 27.5.1933. Das Rektorat 1933/34. Tatsachen und Gedanken*, ed. Hermann Heidegger (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1983); 'The self-assertion of the German University: address, delivered on the solemn assumption of the Rectorate of the University Freiburg. The Rectorate 1933/34: facts and thoughts', tr. with an introduction by Karsten Harries, *Review of Metaphysics*, 38 (March 1985), pp. 467-502.

31 T.N.: 'Der Ursprung des Kunstwerks', in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1950), pp. 1-72; 'The origin of the work of art', in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 143-88.

32 On Heidegger's relationship to Klee, cf. H. W. Petzet, *Auf einen Stern zugehen: Begegnungen und Gespräche mit Martin Heidegger, 1929 bis 1976* (Frankfurt: Societäts-Verlag, 1983), pp. 154ff. (pp. 199f. narrate the Bremen-Lorca anecdote). Cf. also Pöggeler, *Die Frage nach der Kunst. Von Hegel zum Heidegger* (Freiburg/München: Verlag Karl Alber, 1984), pp. 26ff. On Heidegger's relationship to painting, cf. Pöggeler's Leiden lecture 'Kunst und Politik im Zeitalter der Technik', in *Heideggers These vom Ende der Philosophie Verhandlungen des Leidener Heidegger - Symposiums April 1984*, ed. R. J. A. van Dijk, M. F. Fresco and P. Vijgeboom (Neuzeit und Gegenwart, Bd. 5) (Bonn: Bouvier/VVA, 1988). On Heidegger's encounter with Celan, cf. the chapter 'Todtnauberg', in Pöggeler, *Spur des Wortes. Zur Lyrik Paul Celans* (Freiburg/München: Verlag Karl Alber, 1986), pp. 259ff.

33 T.N.: Periphrastic citation of the first line of Celan's poem 'Hier' ('Here') from the collection *Von Schwelle zu Schwelle* (*From Threshold to Threshold*).

The first full line reads: 'Hier – das meint hier, wo die Kirschblüte schwärzer sein will als dort' ('Here – that means here, where the cherry blossom wants to be darker than there').